

**LOOKING AFTER ONE'S OWN:  
The rise of Nationalism  
and the Politics of the Neuendettelsauer Mission  
in Germany, New Guinea and Australia (1928-1933)**

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### Statement

I declare this thesis to be my original work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

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Christine Winter

15 September 2004



## Abstract

This thesis is a history of a German Lutheran mission society, the *Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche*, also known as the Neuendettelsauer Mission, and its organisation, which spanned national borders. It connects events in Germany with developments in New Guinea, and vice versa, exploring the impact of political desires, national ambitions and missionary aspirations. While some developments are traced from 1921 on, the main period of investigation is the years from 1929, the onset of the worldwide depression and the decline of the Weimar Germany, to 1933, the beginning of the National Socialist reign in Germany. The thesis is divided into four parts. Part I deals with the reorganising of the mission in New Guinea after WWI, when the German mission society lost control over its mission field. The main focus is on the establishment of transnational co-operation between Australian, German and American Lutherans, culminating in the formal re-entry of the Neuendettelsauer mission into a position of shared control in 1929. The main settings for this part are Australia and New Guinea. Part II shifts to events in Germany, and examines the last years of the Weimar Republic and Neuendettelsau's political repositioning, which led to a disintegration of transnational Lutheran co-operation. To placate donors at home, the German Lutherans insisted on having their own 'German controlled' mission field. Part III traces the implications of Neuendettelsau's demand to restructure and separate the mission field by detailing the revival of pre-existing and the creation of new tensions amongst the missionaries in New Guinea, and between the mission and the Australian Administration. Part IV analyses the coming to power of the National Socialists in Germany and the political positioning of all the main groups introduced in the previous parts, namely the members of the Neuendettelsauer mission in Germany and in New Guinea, as well as the leading men of the Australian Lutheran church. It concludes by placing the actual formation of a mission field in New Guinea under Neuendettelsau's sole control within this wider political context.

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## Acknowledgements

*'Du hast keinen Essvorrat mit,' sagte er. 'Ich brauche keinen,' sagte ich, 'die Reise ist so lang, dass ich verhungern muss, wenn ich auf dem Weg nichts bekomme. Kein Essvorrat kann mich retten. Es ist ja zum Glück eine wahrhaft ungeheure Reise.'*

'You have no provisions with you', he said. 'I need none', I said, 'the journey is so long, that I'd starve if I get nothing on the way. No provision can save me. With luck it is a truly tremendous journey.'

From Franz Kafka, 'Der Aufbruch' (1936).

I was very fortunate to receive support and encouragement, practical assistance and generous help from many people without which the completion of this thesis would have been impossible. Hank Nelson, who supervised this thesis, gave valuable criticism and supportive comments at every stage throughout the writing of this thesis, and I am grateful for his guidance, patience and tolerance. Support and advice also came from the members of my supervising panel, Robin Hide, Donna Merwick, and Tessa Morris-Suzuki, who were generous with their time and insights. A special debt is owed to Barry Smith who kindly read and commented on the nearly finished draft. Staff of the Division of Pacific and Asian History in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the ANU, particularly Oanh Collins, Dorothy McIntosh, Marion Weeks and Tristan Norman assisted in many administrative matters.

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It has indeed been a truly tremendous journey, which started with Theodor Ahrens' guidance and encouragement. His insight and probing questions have accompanied my research throughout. I am grateful to Heinz Schütte, who put it to me to undertake archival research in Australia, John Garrett, who reminded me that Lutheranism was just one of many Christian traditions, Donald Denoon, who sheltered and housed me on arrival in Australia, and John Docker, who persisted and stirred until I stood up and resumed my research in 2000.

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Geoffrey, Lilly and Arif carried the day-to-day burden of the writing of the thesis. Their love has sustained me. This thesis is dedicated to them.

## Glossary

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (Foreign Office).
ABM	Australian Board of Missions (Anglican).
ALC	American Lutheran Church.
AO	Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP (Organisation of the NSDAP Abroad).
BBKL	Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon.
BFM	Board of Foreign Missions.
DEMR	Deutscher Evangelischer Missionsrat (Council of the German Evangelical Missions).
DEMT	Deutscher Evangelischer Missionstag (Assembly of the German Evangelical Missions).
DORCA	Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs.
EMW	Evangelisches Missionswerk, Hamburg.
LKAN	Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg.
NAA	National Archives of Australia.
ND	Neuendettelsauer Mission; Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche.
NG	New Guinea.
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party).
NSEPB	Nationalsozialistischer Evangelischer Pfarrerbund (National Socialist Pastors' Federation).
SA	Sturmabteilung (Storm troopers); paramilitary branch of the NSDAP.
UELCA	United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia, (Vereinigte Lutherische Kirche Australiens, VELKA).
<i>Äussere Mission</i>	'Foreign Missions' (from 1840s), the term 'Outer Missions' came into use in order to distinguish the work of the mission societies, which Christianized non-Christians, particularly outside Europe, from the work of the 'Inner Missions'.
<i>Evangelisation</i>	Evangelisation, (from 1880s), influenced by Anglo-American religious traditions, the term was made popular in Germany by Protestant Pietistic circles (Gemeinschaftsbewegung) and centres around the idea to bring the gospel to people living estranged from the churches in so-called Christian countries.
<i>Gleichschaltung</i>	Forcing into line, nazification of clubs, societies, and organisations in Germany during the Third Reich.
<i>Heimatmission</i>	'Home Missions', the term is directed towards evangelistic enterprises, and describes an extension, in a way, of the teaching and preaching in churches to groups and places outside.
<i>Innere Mission</i>	'Inner Missions', (from 1830s), the term was made popular by J. H. Wichern for social, educational, practical and charitable activities. It thus encompasses wider activities than the term 'Home Missions' used in Britain and America.
<i>Volk</i>	nation, people, public.
<i>Volksmission</i>	' <i>Volks</i> -mission', in response to the political, social and religious changes in Germany after the First World War the idea was propagated that the Christian churches had to intervene and missionise the <i>Volk</i> , the wider public. Like <i>Innere Mission</i> it envisages a reformation of the whole nation.

Some German terms, such as *Volk*, carry with them such unique philosophical and political concepts that they were not translated into English, unless the context allowed this without losing the distinct meaning. There are also many different German terms for mission work, which were used at the time. While some of these terms seem to address similar tasks and 'target groups', such as *Volksmission* and *Heimatmission*, each word carries with it a distinct concept and purpose. See Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical movement 1517 - 1948*, London 1954, pp. 792f, and Klaus Schäfer, "'Weltmission und Volksmission". Geschichte-Bestandsaufnahme-Perspektiven', [http://www.a-m-d.de/texte/texteauswahl/vortrag\\_klausschaefer/vortrag\\_klausschaefer.pdf](http://www.a-m-d.de/texte/texteauswahl/vortrag_klausschaefer/vortrag_klausschaefer.pdf).

## Note

The maps and images are from the relevant times and publications: they are documents as well as illustrations.

In some instances I have been unable to give appropriate attribution. I can only say that I have attempted to trace origins, and if I have violated copyright I apologize.

## Introduction

### **Looking after one's own: the rise of nationalism and the politics of the Neuendettelsauer Mission in Germany, Australia and New Guinea (1929-1933)**

This thesis is a history of a mission society and its organisation, which spanned national borders. It connects events in Germany with developments in New Guinea, and vice versa. Exploring the impact of political desires, national ambitions and missionary aspirations, I could not simply connect mission histories, which focused on New Guinea, with German local and church histories, but had to write the story I am telling here by moving forth and back, exploring events in Germany and New Guinea anew. My thesis is not a mission history, but more a political history of a mission society. Some developments, which are at the centre of mission histories written about the Lutheran mission in New Guinea, are thus not mentioned in this story, while political events and political and administrative changes marginal to a more narrowly defined mission enterprise take centre stage.

### **In Germany, Australia and New Guinea—a Transnational net**

I started researching the politics of the German mission society *Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche*, better known by the short name *Neuendettelsauer Mission*, in the early 1990s. In keeping with the German focus on National Socialism, my aim was to analyse the involvement of Lutheran foreign missions with National Socialism in Bavaria. When I left Germany and came to Australia the framework for this research, especially its focus on one region within the German nation, turned out to be inadequate. Crossing from one nation and culture to another, I found myself entangled in ongoing connections with both. I became at home in either and neither place. Ideas that had been 'natural' in Germany became strange, while assumptions shared among Australians remained astonishing. Returning to my research in 2000, I found the Neuendettelsauer mission entangled in a not dissimilar situation. While the home base of the mission was in Bavaria, it was a transnational organisation connected with other church and government organisations in a network which spanned several nations.<sup>1</sup> Actions that were meant by the society to react to a specific situation in one country influenced relationships in another country in

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<sup>1</sup> See organisational chart, p 5.

unexpected ways. The framework this thesis uses to examine the politics of the Neuendettelsauer mission is therefore appropriately transnational.

The Neuendettelsauer society was founded in 1849 by Wilhelm Löhe,<sup>2</sup> then Parish pastor of the little village of Neuendettelsau in Franconia, Northern Bavaria, with the aim to train Lutheran clergy to accompany Lutheran emigrants to America and keep them from drifting away from Lutheran communities to other denominations.<sup>3</sup> These clergy would, Löhe envisaged, also try as missionaries to bring the gospel to pagan tribes near the new Lutheran settlements. For Löhe, a foreign mission directed at pagans, and an inner mission directed at Christians at home and abroad, were intrinsically connected. They were, he argued, parts of one task, part of the 'mission' to gather all people into one flock, under one shepherd:

Denn die Mission ist nichts als die Eine Kirche Gottes in ihrer Bewegung, die Verwirklichung einer allgemeinen, katholischen Kirche.<sup>4</sup>

For the Mission is nothing but the One church of God in motion, the realisation of one universal, Catholic<sup>5</sup> church.

A society called *Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche e.V.*<sup>6</sup> was to act as a substitute for the Bavarian Lutheran church until such time that the church came to take its responsibilities to missionize seriously. The three functions Löhe saw as one—providing pastors to emigrant Lutherans, converting distant pagans, and rejuvenating the church at home—remained central to the Neuendettelsauer tradition. During the late 1920s and early 1930s the Neuendettelsauer mission trained seminarians for work in a number of places. The majority of seminarians, all of them

<sup>2</sup> For a short biography and bibliography see Frank Schumann, 'LÖHE, Johann Konrad Wilhelm', BBKL.

<sup>3</sup> In 1842 the first group of clergy was sent out to America. In 1849 the Neuendettelsauer society was founded with the name 'Society for Inner Mission', and later renamed 'Society for Inner and Foreign Mission'. Four years later a seminary was opened in Neuendettelsau to train male clergy, and a society for a female diaconate was founded, the *Lutherischer Verein für weibliche Diakonie*, with its motherhouse also located in Neuendettelsau. For a short history see Missionswerk der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern, 'Geschichte des Missionswerkes', <http://test.rotabene.de/mission/ISY/index.php?get=121>, and Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche e.V., 'Aus unserer Geschichte', <http://www.gesellschaft-fuer-mission.de/gesellschaft/index.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche. Den Freunden der Lutherischen Kirche zur Überlegung und Besprechung dargeboten*, 1845, in: Löhe, W., *Gesammelte Werke*, hrsg. Im Auftrage der Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der lutherischen Kirche e.V. von K. Ganzert, Neuendettelsau 1951-1986, Volume 5.1, Neuendettelsau 1954, pp. 85-179. Quote p. 96. All translations are, if not otherwise indicated, by me.

<sup>5</sup> Löhe used this word not as a signifier for a specific denomination, the Catholic Church, but in the original meaning of the Greek word, as global, universal. Löhe was part of a wider neo-confessional push of the mid nineteenth century, and saw Lutheranism as being 'true', and all other denominations as impure, and based on wrong beliefs. His ecumenical aspirations to form one church went hand in hand with demands that this one church be the 'true' church, based on the right doctrines.

<sup>6</sup> Initially the society founded by Löhe in 1849 was called *Gesellschaft für Innere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche*. The reference to foreign missions, *Äussere Mission*, was added later.



men, were German Lutherans, who were sent either as Diaspora-pastors to Brazil, or as missionaries to New Guinea. From 1930 a small number of Ukrainian Lutherans received their theological education at Neuendettelsau. Before the establishment of a seminary in South Australia after WWI, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia had sent most of its future clergy to Neuendettelsau for training, and it occasionally still recruited a Neuendettelsau seminarian. The training of seminarians from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in Neuendettelsau connected the society to churches and synods throughout the world, mainly in the USA, Australia, Brazil, and the Ukraine. This web of transnational relations expands if one looks also at the membership of leading men of the Neuendettelsauer society in other Lutheran organisations with a transnational outlook, such as the *Martin Luther Bund*.<sup>7</sup> What set relationships with New Guinea, initially a German colony, apart from all others was that Neuendettelsau's only foreign mission field under its control was located there. Thus the Lutheran mission in New Guinea played a central part in the formation of Neuendettelsau's self-understanding and public profile, and most emotional and financial resources were directed towards it. Analysing the multitude of transnational links of the Neuendettelsauer mission would be a huge project: this thesis concentrates on Neuendettelsau's foreign mission activities, and its connections with New Guinea.

Relations with American and Australian Lutherans are an intrinsic part of this story, as both had been supporting Neuendettelsau in its mission endeavours in New Guinea from the start, and even took over the 'orphaned' mission field after the outbreak of WWI. A volume entitled '*The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*', is to date the best and most comprehensive collection reflecting this complex transnational history. Focusing more on the mission and evangelization in New Guinea itself, and matters abroad directly connected to them, it contains contributions by New Guinean, German, Australian and American Lutherans.<sup>8</sup>

I limited the thesis to the organisational network of Neuendettelsau's foreign mission with considerable regret. By doing so I had eliminated the notion of 'German Diaspora'

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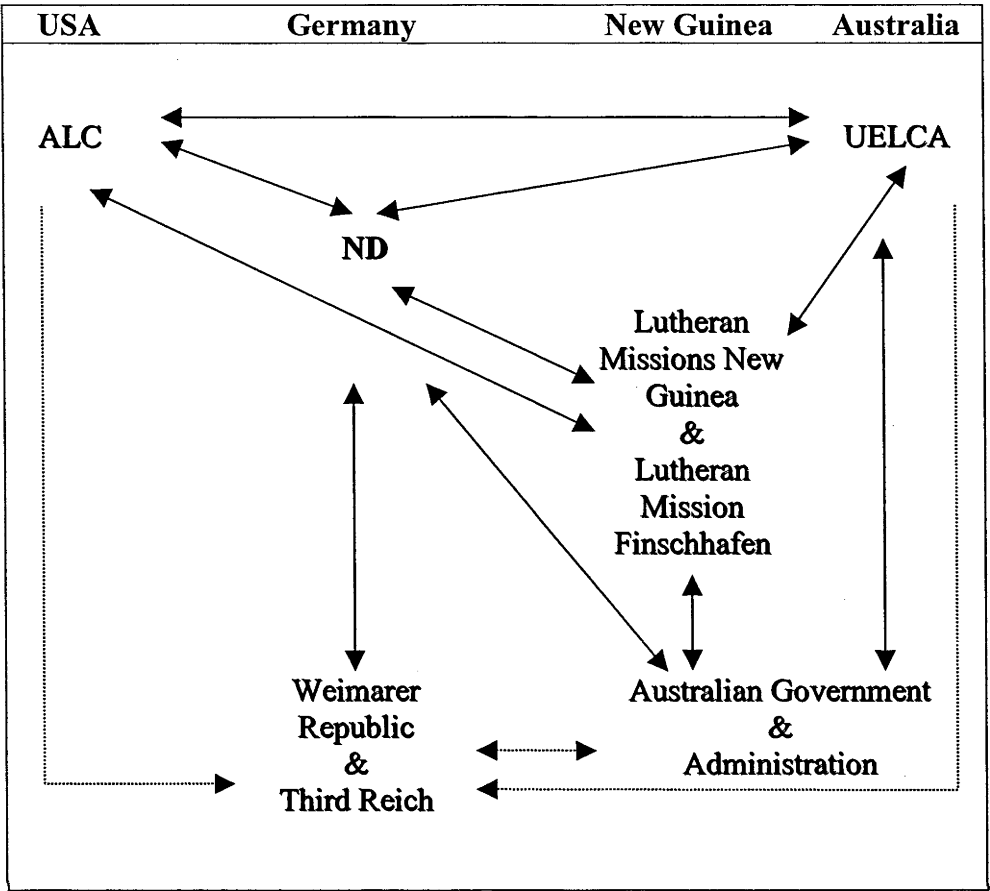
<sup>7</sup> Until 1932 the Bavarian branch of the Martin Luther Bund, the *Martin-Luther Verein* was named *Lutherischer Gotteskasten in Bayern*. For a short history, especially in regard to connections with the Neuendettelsauer society, see for example the home page of the Martin-Luther-Verein, 'Der Martin-Luther-Verein stellt sich vor', <http://www.martin-luther-verein-bayern.de/ueberuns.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986. Despite its focus on 'actual' mission work the collection shows an interesting diversity of views about the past, and has some comments on political tensions between the Lutheran partner organisation during the 1920s and 1930s.

and 'Lutheran Diaspora', which I thought were mainly connected to the Brazilian and Ukrainian Diaspora work. I worried about oversimplifying important complexities which intersected with political aspirations especially of the National Socialist regime in regard to *Auslandsdeutsche*, Germans abroad, and *Volksdeutsche*, people of German descent (blood). While the thesis, ending in 1933, cannot include discussions on National Socialist politics and these groups, as these became dominant issues only after the mid-1930s, I was keen to show some early aspirations and emotional connections of members of the Neuendettelsauer mission to these two diasporas, the national and the religious, and hint at some consequences. But in the process of my research and writing it turned out that the 'diaspora' was still present even with the focus on foreign missions in the form of Australian Lutherans, and the community of German missionaries in New Guinea.

The Neuendettelsauer society had to negotiate directly and indirectly with a number of national governments, but in keeping with my chosen framework the thesis will be limited to analysing the influence of the German political system on Neuendettelsau, and the society's relationship with the German government and with the Australian government, which administered New Guinea as a C Mandate of the League of Nations from 1921.

Organisational Chart:



ALC	American Lutheran Church
UELCA	United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia
ND	Neuendettelsauer Mission

In this diagram the complexities of relationships are immediately apparent. There is no simple hierarchy of people or institutions and much communication could be sent either directly or mediated through a third party.

## A political history: politics past and present

In 1985 as a young theological student at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität in Erlangen I was involved in the preparations for celebrating the anniversary of the *Stuttgarter Schulderklärung*, a declaration German Protestant churches had made in 1945 about their shortcomings during the Third Reich. The declaration was a consensus statement, and far more vague and conservative than the more radical declaration in Darmstadt two years later, which was not endorsed by the German state churches.<sup>9</sup> We students asked to use university facilities for the celebrations and invited all faculty members to participate. To our utter surprise the faculty was split down the middle, and we did not have sufficient support. It was only after long negotiations and some radical changes to the programme that rooms became available.<sup>10</sup> The explanation we were given was that 'Elert's widow was still alive'. We had no idea why a celebration of the Stuttgart declaration would upset the widow of the late Professor Werner Elert. So we went into the library to investigate.

Werner Elert, who had taught theology in Erlangen since 1923, was one of the most influential theologians of the *Neuluthertum*. Elert was loosely linked to the Neuendettelsauer Mission through personal and professional links with members of the mission, especially director Friedrich Eppelein, who also taught at the University in Erlangen.<sup>11</sup> In 1933, when the National Socialist government introduced laws excluding

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<sup>9</sup> For a history and the text of the *Stuttgarter Schulderklärung* and the *Darmstädter Wort* (Ein Wort des Bruderrates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland zum politischen Weg unseres Volkes) see Martin Greschat (ed.), *Im Zeichen der Schuld. 40 Jahre Stuttgarter Schuldbekennntnis. Eine Dokumentation*, Neukirchener Verlag Neukirchen-Vluyn 1985. At the centre of the declaration of Stuttgart is the following admission:

Wohl haben wir lange Jahre hindurch im Namen Jesu Christi gegen den Geist gekämpft, der im nationalsozialistischen Gewaltregiment seinen furchtbaren Ausdruck gefunden hat; aber wir klagen uns an, daß wir nicht mutiger bekannt, nicht treuer gebetet, nicht frohlicher geglaubt und nicht brennender geliebt haben.

We have fought through long years in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit, which has found its terrible expression in the National Socialist terror-regime; but we accuse ourselves, that we have not confessed more courageously, not prayed more staunchly, not believed more joyously, and not loved more ardently.

The declaration stated that the churches had been doing nothing wrong. They just had not done enough. The words of Darmstadt, in contrast, emphasised and detailed 'the wrong and bad ways, we as Germans have walked along and gone astray in regard to our political intentions and actions'. (Greschat, *Im Zeichen der Schuld*, pp. 45f and 85).

<sup>10</sup> The pastor in charge of the Lutheran university church maintained that unfortunately the church was so booked out that no appropriate date could be found. The celebrations therefore took place in the local Calvinist church *Hugenottenkirche*.

<sup>11</sup> Elert's theology and church politics during the Third Reich were mainly supported by Neuendettelsau, and it was to Eppelein Elert turned to for advice on whether to join the National Socialist pastors organisation (NSEPB). Elert never joined the NSDAP or the NSEPB. See especially 16.10.1933 Elert to Eppelein, ND 13/1, and further correspondence between Elert and Eppelein in ND 25/71-74; for literature

non-Aryans from the civil service, Protestant churches debated whether the churches should likewise dismiss employees of Jewish descent. Two universities, the University of Marburg and the University of Erlangen, were approached for expert reports on this matter. Erlangen's ambiguous statement jointly written by Elert and his colleague Paul Althaus on whether to introduce the so-called Aryan clause into the church is an example of the way concepts of Volkstum and theories about the legitimacy and role of the state translated into policy advice. The two Erlangen Professors came to the conclusion that it was un-biblical to exclude non-Arian Christians, as baptism not blood was the relevant issue for a church community. But, as the church was part of the wider structures given by God in the creation, of which the state was one, and had the duty to be *Volkskirche* for Germans, government politics and pressures from the wider society should not be ignored. Lutherans of Jewish descent should therefore be encouraged not to aspire to leading positions in the church or voluntarily leave such positions.<sup>12</sup>

This incident turned me into an historian, and the period of the Third Reich has remained my main focus ever since. When Professor Theodor Ahrens, Professor for mission history, comparative religion and ecumenical theology at the University of Hamburg, invited me in 1991 to research foreign missions and their political involvement with National Socialism in Bavaria, I was faced with an exciting, but personally difficult task. As I had experienced in Erlangen, remembering or researching the National Socialist past was met with ambivalent reactions by the Neuendettelsauer mission and people associated with it. Director Dr Helmut Becker agreed to open the society's archive for me, but other people castigated me for choosing such a pointless, counterproductive topic. Could I not write about something constructive instead, I was asked by one distant relative. I came as a stranger to the Neuendettelsauer mission and its history, but I had long-standing family connections, and this made some aspects of the research easier, and complicated others.<sup>13</sup>

There are two major debates in regard to relationships between politics and foreign missions, which have polarised scholars. One is the question whether and in what way foreign missions had been agents of colonialism. The other is, how close to National

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see for example Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, 'ELERT, Werner', BBKL and Matthias Freudenberg, 'SPRENGER, Paul', BBKL.

<sup>12</sup> The *Erlanger Gutachten* was also printed in Neuendettelsau's mission journal *Freimund*, 1933, pp. 398-400. See also Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, 'ELERT, Werner', BBKL.

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf Ruf, director of Neuendettelsau from 1921 to 1928 was my great-grandfather, and one of his nine children went to New Guinea as a nurse and married a German Lutheran missionary.

Socialism German foreign missions had been. The latter debate has predominantly been a German one, albeit one of its earliest voices has come from the Netherlands, while one of the most recent contributions has been made by a German mission theologian based in Britain.<sup>14</sup> The following overview attempts to locate the Neuendettelsauer mission within these wider controversies, as well as clarifying pertinent to this debate the focus of this thesis, and the intellectual influences on me.

When Christian Hoekendijk's thesis, published in Dutch in 1948 as '*Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingswetenschap*', analysed the entanglement of German Protestant foreign missions with National Socialism, it did so in a roundabout way. It focused on two key concepts, church and *Volk*, and followed their genesis within foreign mission theory from the time of the Romantic age through to Hoekendijk's contemporaries. Christian Keyßer was one of the main mission theoreticians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century studied by Hoekendijk. Hoekendijk's work was part of a wider stream of historiography, which endeavoured to show ideological continuities leading into the Third Reich. The nucleus for political allegiances and actions was traced to ideological positions entangled within religious thought and doctrines. Hoekendijk's thesis, written in the Netherlands during WWII, is passionate, with displays of anger and disappointment at the failure of Christian churches and societies. In response, it has at times provoked passion and anger directed against Hoekendijk and his analysis of German foreign missions.<sup>15</sup>

The reception of Hoekendijk's work by German Protestant mission circles was rather reserved. It took nearly two decades, until the mid-1960s, for his book to be published in German.<sup>16</sup> By choosing the categories 'church' and '*Volk*', Hoekendijk had stepped out of Lutheran religious discourses, which had been used especially after 1945 to explain the political involvement (or lack thereof) of Lutheran churches or mission societies. At the heart of these apologetic arguments has been the so-called 'doctrine of the two kingdoms'. This doctrine provided a model not only to justify lack of political opposition to the Third Reich, but also to postulate that by creed and deed orthodox

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<sup>14</sup> Ustorf, Werner, *Sailing on the Next Tide. Mission, Missiology and the Third Reich*, Peter Lang Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, Frankfurt a.M., 2000 (Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity, Vol. 125).

<sup>15</sup> Hoekendijk, *Kerken Volk in de Duitse Zendingswetenschap*. Door J. C. H., Utrecht, Theolog. Diss. v. 1948; for biographical details see Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz and Thomas Uecker, 'Hoekendijk, Johannes Christiaan', BBKL; Ustorf also argues that Hoekendijk was limited to a history of ideas, as archival material had not been available. See Ustorf, *Sailing on the Next Tide*, pp. 15-24.

<sup>16</sup> Hoekendijk, Christian, *Kirche und Volk in der deutschen Missionswissenschaft*, München, Kaiser, 1967.

Lutheran clergy occupied a space apart from politics. Ignoring historical shifts of the doctrine of the two kingdoms and its political context, Luther's doctrine was interpreted to mean that political involvement per se was a violation of the distinctiveness of the worldly and the spiritual realm, the separation of church and state. It follows that Lutheran church organisations and their employees, if they were true to their doctrines, could not and should not have been involved in politics. Similar to statements such as 'missionaries cannot be racists', it postulates such a position as 'normative' and therefore 'normal', and categorises all historic evidence to the contrary as individual aberrations.

An example of this apologetic argument is Hanfried Fontius' exploration of Karl Steck's theology and his influence on foreign mission developments. Karl Steck, a Bavarian pastor and theologian, who had worked for the Neuendettelsauer society from 1909 to 1928 as *Konrektor* and *Inspektor*, and from 1928 for the Bavarian church, had been an innovative thinker within his field. Visiting New Guinea just before the outbreak of WWI, he identified missionary Christian Keyßer's approach to conversion and congregation-building as a new mission method and had it implemented as Neuendettelsau's new mission strategy. In 1915, when Steck and two other missionaries, Hans Raum and Wilhelm Flierl, refused to give an oath of neutrality to the occupying Australian forces, they were interned in Australia for the rest of the war.<sup>17</sup> Returned to Germany, Steck sought to have the Neuendettelsauer society follow the new approach, and this exacerbated conflicts between the director of the mission, Rudolf Ruf, and Steck about the direction of the society, and especially its role in evangelisation at home. In 1928 both men resigned, and Steck took up a position in the Bavarian church especially created for him, co-ordinating all foreign mission activities within the church.<sup>18</sup> In this position he endeavoured to bring change to the structure of both mission work and congregations in Bavaria along the lines developed in New Guinea. Yet it was not so much Steck who was acknowledged for this radical shift in approach, but his colleague Christian Keyßer.<sup>19</sup> Many a scholar, who identified

<sup>17</sup> See Fontius p. 185, also Peter Biskup, 'Hermann Detzner: New Guinea's First Coast Watcher', *The Journal of the Papua New Guinea Society*, 2 (1): 5-21.

<sup>18</sup> The Neuendettelsauer mission society was finally incorporated into the Bavarian church in the early 1970s. It is somewhat of an irony that Steck's successor as *Berufsarbeiter* for mission in the Bavarian church was Walther Ruf, the son of mission director Ruf.

<sup>19</sup> See Theodor Ahrens, 'Die Aktualität Christian Keyßers', p. 94. During the 1930s Keyßer's and Bruno Gutmann's work was labeled 'Volkstumsmission'. Herwig Wagner in 1998 did not repeat this term, which had become ambiguous, to say the least, but instead declared Keyßer an 'intuitive precursor of the

Neuendettelsau's traditions with 'the Keyßer method' have not only overlooked the importance of Steck, but also the internal resistance at the time within the Neuendettelsauer society at home and abroad to changes suggested by Keyßer and Steck.

In his thesis Hanfried Fontius, himself a German Lutheran missionary in New Guinea during the 1960s<sup>20</sup>, examined what effect Karl Steck's theology had on mission theory and practice in New Guinea and Bavaria.<sup>21</sup> In his introductory chapter 'The special prerequisites of the Neuendettelsauer Mission',<sup>22</sup> Fontius tried to show that the Neuendettelsauer mission kept a distance from involvement in politics in general and colonial politics in particular. He argued that as Lutherans, Neuendettelsau's mission staff, with a few individual exceptions, thought and acted according to the doctrine of the two realms, and were therefore apolitical. Central to his argument was a short analysis of nationalism and language policies. Fontius argued:

Neben diesen Aktionen einzelner, die nationalistisch gedeutet werden können, hat Neuendettelsau in der Sprachenfrage eine Position bezogen, die bei der deutschen wie bei der australischen Regierung auf Kritik stieß. ... Da diese Sprachenpolitik schon von der deutschen Kolonialbehörde kritisiert wurde, kann sie nicht nationalistisch gedeutet werden.<sup>23</sup>

Besides these actions by several individuals, which can be interpreted as nationalistic, the Neuendettelsauer mission chose a position in regard to the language question, which was met with criticism by the German as well as the Australian government. ... As this language policy had already been criticised by the German colonial administration, it cannot be interpreted as nationalistic.

Fontius claimed that Neuendettelsau's language policy shows that overall the mission was not motivated by nationalism. Proof of this, Fontius argued, is that Neuendettelsau had opposed the aims of *both* the German and the Australian colonial governments. Fontius' attempt to disentangle Neuendettelsau's language policies from accusations of German Anti-Australian nationalism by pointing to conflicts with the German colonial government is unconvincing. Are only ideas and actions that met the approval of the government of the day nationalistic? Embedded in this argument, hidden in a footnote, is an attempt to break Hoekendijk's central argument about a shift in Lutheranism during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which had led Lutheran foreign missions, Hoekendijk implied, close to conservative chauvinistic racism, and ultimately National Socialism.

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so-called contextual theology'. See Herwig Wagner, 'Keyßer, Christian', BBKL. There is to date no thorough study examining the influences on Christian Keyßer, and the history of his reception.

<sup>20</sup> Fontius was sent out by the Leipzig Mission, and worked in New Guinea from 1959 to 1972. See Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 655.

<sup>21</sup> Published as: Hanfried Fontius, *Mission - Gemeinde - Kirche in Neuguinea, Bayern und bei Karl Steck*, Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission Erlangen 1975 [Erlanger Taschenbuecher Band 28].

<sup>22</sup> Die Besonderen Voraussetzungen der Neuendettelsauer Mission, Fontius, pp. 33-40.

<sup>23</sup> Fontius, p. 39. It is interesting that Fontius uses the terms his sources used, such as 'Sprachenfrage' (language problem), and 'Sprachensplitter' (language fragments).



Citing the theologian Werner Elert against Hoekendijk's criticism of Lutheran mission concepts and their entanglement with *Volkstum*, Fontius claimed that appreciation of *Volkstum* predated German Romanticism, the period Hoekendijk nominated as the time when Lutheranism embraced and incorporated concepts of *Volkstum*. Neuendettelsau's views on language, Fontius concluded, were part of a fundamental appraisal of *Volkstum* by Lutheranism.<sup>24</sup> Defending the Lutheran foreign mission against Hoekendijk's examination of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century traditions, Fontius responded by making core-beliefs ahistoric and unchanging.

Fontius is part of a long tradition of showing continuities, rather than conflict and change.<sup>25</sup> Partly this is due to factors associated with a specific religious identity of Lutheranism, which tends to emphasise the biblical foundations of beliefs and doctrines as a measurement of orthodoxy.<sup>26</sup> Partly it is a response to challenges of Steck's and Keyßer's personal and ideological 'integrity'. From at least the 1920s Steck, trying to bring change to Neuendettelsau and its mission field, had been criticized, amongst others by American and Australian Lutherans connected with Neuendettelsau, for being un-Lutheran and heretical. Keyßer, despite his national and international fame as one of two influential German *Volkstums*-mission theoreticians, was at times thought by some to be too close to Steck. In 1945 and 1946 Neuendettelsau was 'denazified', and those who lost their positions included Christian Keyßer and the then director Friedrich Eppelein. In 1946 Keyßer was rehabilitated in a second trial.<sup>27</sup> A festschrift was

<sup>24</sup> Fontius, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Or to be more precise: continuities are emphasized for the home base of the mission and its European staff, while conflict and change are the prerogative of the mission field.

<sup>26</sup> Having the 'right' beliefs', being the 'true church', being 'true' to the bible and the reformation.

<sup>27</sup> Keyßer was classified as *Belasteter* by the Spruchkammer Ansbach-Land on 25 September 1946, the second highest category out of five. He appealed and was reclassified as a *Mitläufer* on 20 December 1946, which was category four. The court was particularly impressed by the testimony of Adam Schuster. On 29 April 1946 Keyßer commented on his denazification form (Meldebogen auf Grund des Gesetzes zur Befreiung von Nationalsozialismus und Militarismus vom 5. März 1946, No. 595):

Ich war Nazi aus Ueberzeugung und freiem Willen.  
Warum?

1. Weil der Nat.-Sozialismus auf demokratischem Wege zur Macht kam.
2. Weil die nat.-soz. Regierung rechtmäßig und von allen Staaten anerkannt war.
3. Weil ich die Feindpropaganda der ersten Weltkriege in Australien kennengelernt hatte.
4. Weil man Deutschland alle Kolonien weggenommen und 15 Jahre lang dem demokratischen Deutschland keine zurückgegeben hatte.

I was Nazi on the basis of my conviction and free will. Why?

1. Because Nat[ional] Socialism came to power democratically.
2. Because the Nat[ional] Soc[ialist] government was legitimate and recognised by all nations.
3. Because I had come to know enemy propaganda of the First World War in Australia.
4. Because Germany had been robbed of her colonies and democratic Germany was not given any back for 15 years.

Keyßer added that he stayed in the party to be able to continue to make protests as a party member, and listed restrictions imposed on him during the Third Reich. For all denazification documents, testimonies and attachments see Amtsgericht Ansbach, Dr Christian Keyßer, Aktenzeichen W66 IV. Whether Keyßer's reclassification can be seen as a rehabilitation is a matter of interpretation. The Spruchkammer

published to celebrate his 70th birthday and cement his rehabilitation. The leading article by Friedrich Epplein was entitled ‘Christian Keyßer, a follower of Martin Luther and Wilhelm Löhe?’.<sup>28</sup> Religious continuity provides proof against accusations of heresy, and political transgressions. Since then celebrations of Christian Keyßer’s practical and theoretical achievements have dominated publications, while critical appraisals have been marginal.<sup>29</sup> Keyßer became the embodiment of Neuendettelsau.<sup>30</sup>

In this thesis I am attempting to open two fundamental assumptions for re-investigation.

The first assumption is that beliefs are crucial for actions. The majority of both ‘critical’ and ‘apologetic’ mission histories, Hoekendijk’s included, tend to focus on an analysis of religious traditions and their consequences. While I am indebted to these scholars and the questions this debate has opened, their emphases on central ideas downplay contradictions, accidents, conflicting emotions and aspirations. These histories of traditions seem to argue: to think wrong is to go down wrong paths – and then: to think right is to act right. Thus these historians have not only made the direct influence of traditions and beliefs the content of their analysis, but have attached a redemptive power to their narratives. In my thesis I work with the hypothesis that conflicting beliefs can be held by an individual. Rather than understanding actions as the result of a logical and

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Ansbach-Land classified Epplein right from the start in his one and only trial on 23 September 1946 as a *Mitläufer*. See Amtsgericht Ansbach, Dr Friedrich Epplein, Aktenzeichen K/494/46.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Ruf (ed.) *Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag des Herrn Missionsinspektors a.D.Dr.h.c. Christian Keyßer in Neuendettelsau am 7. März 1947*. Im Auftrag der Bayerischen Missionskonferenz herausgegeben von Walter Ruf, (*Jahrbuch fuer Mission* 1949 und 1950). Friedrich Epplein’s article ‘Christian Keyßer, ein Gefolgsmann Martin Luthers und Wilhelm Löhes?’ (p. 9-24) set out some of the accusations against Keyßer as ‘unlutheran’ and ‘heretic’ (p. 9-11), and refuted them. Keyßer, Epplein emphasised, was also not ‘an outsider of the Neuendettelsauer Mission’. The question mark used in the title, Epplein declared, thus needed to be deleted, ‘crossed out’. The *Festschrift*, comprising 6 articles and a bibliography, was published three years after the celebrations, due to delays in Allied approval for printing. (Personal comment, Walther Ruf, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> See especially Theodor Ahrens, ‘Die Aktualität Christian Keyßers’, in: *Zeitschrift für Mission*, 14 (1988), 94-110; Hoekendijk, *Kirche und Volk*, pp. 177-189; Walter Holsten *Das Evangelium und die Völker* Berlin 1939, pp.125-138; Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, ‘Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und die Anfänge des Kirchenkampfes’, in: *Zeitschrift f. bayer. Kirchengeschichte*, 40 (1971), 227-245; see also R.M. Smith, ‘Christ, Keysser, and Culture. Lutheran Evangelistic Policy and Practice in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, *Canberra Anthropology* Vol. 2, No. 1, April 1979, and Koehne, P. ‘Justification, the Ministry and the Keysser Method’, *Lutheran Theological Journal* 17 (1983) no. 3, pp. 103-114. For further literature see Herwig Wagner, ‘Keysser, Christian’, BBKL. The chapter ‘I the Nationalsocialist’ in Keyßer’s published autobiography, edited by his son in law Wilhelm Fugmann, is considerably shorter than that in his handwritten manuscript from 1948. See Keyßer, *Das bin bloss ich’ Lebenserinnerungen aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Wilhelm Fugmann*, Freimund Verlag Neuendettelsau 1966.

<sup>30</sup> See for example Barry Hill, *Broken song: T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal possession*, Milsons Point, N.S.W.: Knopf, 2002; Hill’s book is a biography of Ted Strehlow, son of Christian Keyßer’s sister Bertha Strehlow (nee Keyßer) and the Neuendettelsau trained missionary Carl Strehlow. Hill quotes solely from Keyßer’s writing to explain the religious influences shaping Karl Strehlow during his training at the Seminar in Neuendettelsau in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. See pp. 75-77.

seemingly harmonious application of a set of ideas, which in themselves are more or less coherent, I am interested in writing a political history which places ideals and visions within the context of conflicting desires, disputes, misunderstandings, and compromises.

The second assumption that I question is the centrality of Christian Keyßer. When analysing mission theory Keyßer's importance is to some extent indisputable. But when writing a political history the focus shifts to other people, such as the German director Friedrich Epplein, and his Australian colleague Friedrich Otto Theile.<sup>31</sup>

### **The concept of party-political neutrality**

As indicated earlier, discussing politics within Lutheranism is generally done by referring to the 'doctrine of the two kingdoms'. Aware of these scholarly debates and the doctrine's theological history and significance, I have on purpose chosen not to debate Neuendettelsau's politics within this theological framework, but have analysed Neuendettelsau's changing political positioning by using the problematic of 'party-political neutrality'.

When I was working in the Archives of the Neuendettelsauer society, the archivist, who was one of the people concerned about my choice of topic, one day brought me a file with the words: 'Here it is. The Neuendettelsauer Mission was opposed to the NSDAP'. Reading through the file, and looking through related material, such as protocols and correspondence, I came to a different conclusion. The material on the 'case Lossin', an employee of Neuendettelsau and early member of the NSDAP, who was sacked by Neuendettelsau in 1930, did not provide an easy answer as suggested by the helpful archivist. Rather it complicated my questioning, and led me to place the term 'party-political neutrality' at the centre of my analysis of Neuendettelsau's political identity during the last years of the Weimar republic.

The idea of 'party-political neutrality' is a concept which has been more important in German thought and practice than in the English-speaking world, where a different idea,

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<sup>31</sup> Choosing to write about the people in formal positions of power has unfortunately meant that women are marginal to this thesis.

that of 'political neutrality', dominates.<sup>32</sup> 'Party political neutrality' became widely used in the new democracy of Western Germany after WWII. The term can be found in numerous articles of association of German organisations and societies, such as sports clubs, and educational institutions, who had to be re-constituted after 1945. Combined time and time again with the phrases 'ideological tolerance' and 'religious tolerance' 'party-political neutrality' signified a reaction against the National Socialist one-party dictatorship. Criticised at the time by thinkers and politicians of the left as an act of 'de-politicisation' aimed at empowering anti-democratic political forces, it has remained an ambivalent concept.<sup>33</sup> Recent developments in France to keep public organisations, especially schools, 'neutral' in regard to religion, are part of a Western endeavor to limit the influence of Islam and have been a reminder that assertions of 'neutrality' have political aims in specific historical contexts. The usage of the term in Western Germany after 1945 thus obstructs rather than illuminates what was meant by it during the Weimar Republic. Consequently instead of arriving at a sharp definition of the term, I use it in my thesis to ask a series of questions: What did the Neuendettelsauer society mean by 'party-political neutrality'? What was it to achieve? Was it abandoned at some stage, and what replaced it?

### **The Lutheran Mission in New Guinea, and the politics of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia**

In Franconia, where I grew up, New Guinea has continued to be a presence in the lives of those who belong to a Lutheran community, although now looked after not by a mission society, but as an ecumenical partner by the Bavarian church. Especially in small villages and hamlets where Lutheran communities live as islands within a sea of Catholicism,<sup>34</sup> and face the decline of traditional small-scale farming and with it rapid social and economic change, it has been comforting to know that we are connected to the world in such a way, that we are not nobody, that somebody out there knows about us. In the late 1980s I listened to a speaker at a church festival giving this message: We

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<sup>32</sup> The search engine Google finds 12,300 web references to 'political neutrality', and only 43 to 'party political neutrality'. In German the result dramatically differs: The search term 'Parteipolitische Neutralität' brings 824 web references, and 'politische Neutralität' 1,750. The Archival database 'J-Store' provides over 200 articles containing the term 'political neutrality', but only 2 for 'party political neutrality', and both articles deal with German history.

<sup>33</sup> See for example reports on the second party meeting of the Social Democrats in Nuremberg in 1947, <http://library.fes.de/fulltext/sozimit/1947-101.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> Franconia has a higher percentage of Lutherans than other regions of Bavaria. Because of the consequences of the Treaty of Westphalia (*cuius regio, eius religio*) whole villages were either Catholic or Lutheran. This religious division has only begun to alter with the influx of refugees after WWII.

here might be a small village, and the bureaucrats in Munich might not know who we are, but out there in New Guinea our village is known. We are not forgotten. People there think about us, and pray for us.<sup>35</sup> A century of intense lobbying, recruiting and advertising by the Neuendettelsauer society in its surrounding regions has left a lasting imprint, and has provided a resource of comfort and confidence during a time of change and loss.<sup>36</sup>

At the Archives of the Lutheran Church in Adelaide, I was welcomed—after some initial reservations—with great warmth,<sup>37</sup> and invited each day into the back room for a cup of tea in the afternoon. There, sitting around the table next to a photocopier, a sink and a small fridge, my research topic provoked anecdotes about WWII, such as the story how maverick pastor Doehler had outsmarted the Security Services.<sup>38</sup> Soon the talk turned to WWI, and to stories of house raids, public hostility, destruction of church buildings, arrest and the internment of Australian Lutherans. The Lutheran ordeal during WWI extends the story of religious persecution in Prussia during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is, like one of the most important founding stories of the Australian nation, Gallipoli, a deeply traumatic series of events, which are still alive in family and community memory today, as well as a story through which later events are interpreted.

At the heart of this story of persecution is the struggle for the continuation of Lutheran religious and cultural identity. In response to the events of WWI the Australian churches and synods, which in 1921 formed the United Evangelical Church of Australia<sup>39</sup>, had to

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<sup>35</sup> This is not to idealize or romanticize Franconian villagers. Pride about achievements of those who became missionaries is mixed with resentment about being asked for donations for something which does not really benefit the local community directly. Many know about connections with New Guinea only vaguely, while most of the schoolchildren are interested in whether New Guineans are 'still' cannibals, and how many missionaries ended up in a big cooking pot. (Personal observations, Mittelfranken, 1988).

<sup>36</sup> Especially influential were talks given by missionaries, who during their recovery holidays in Neuendettelsau, were sent on speaking tours through towns, villages and hamlets.

<sup>37</sup> Important was the fact, that I was not ordained. Women's ordination has remained controversial amongst Australian Lutherans, and is not practised yet in the Australian Lutheran Church.

<sup>38</sup> Several versions of this story are in circulation. This one was told to me in the Archives, and I repeat it from memory: Interned during WWII, Ludwig Doehler had to leave his frail wife and sick daughter behind where they faced the difficult task of preparing the garden for potato-planting. Answering his wife's question whether he knew anybody who could help them, Doehler replied in a letter from the internment camp that the garden best be left alone, as he had hidden important documents there. The next day, after a thorough search by Security personnel, who had dug up the garden and of course found nothing, Mrs Doehler went and planted the potatoes. For a written account see Philip W. Holzknecht, 'A Priesthood of Priests? The German Lutherans in Queensland', Manfred Jurgensen, Alan Corkhill (eds.), *The German Presence in Queensland over the last 150 Years*, Department of German, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 1988, pp. 168f.

<sup>39</sup> The church had two names, United Evangelical Church of Australia (UELCA), and Vereinigte Evangelisch Lutherische Kirche Australiens (VELKA). Correspondence and meetings were partly in German and partly in English. German and English church journals existed.

re-define and re-negotiate their place in the Australian nation, as well as their links to Germany. Having left Prussia to escape forced amalgamation with Calvinists, Australian Lutherans emphasized the separation of church and state, of religious and political matters. Attacks during WWI for being too close to all things German were seen as a misunderstanding of political preferences for what was a religious identity. To secure a safe space within the nation, the UELCA opened its own seminary for training clergy, and gradually shifted from bi-lingualism to the exclusive use of English.<sup>40</sup> Yet, as Diaspora-Lutherans, whose religious and cultural centre was the cradle of the Reformation, Germany, this shift disrupted long-standing connections with German religious and educational organisations. During this period of transition the Lutheran mission in New Guinea played an important role. On one hand the mission became the catalyst for the formation of the UELCA<sup>41</sup>, on the other it was a focal point for many of the UELCA's ecumenical relations.

WWI and its aftermath had a profound effect on both Neuendettelsau and the Australian Lutherans. Both had to rethink and re-define their place and role within their respective nations. For both, involvement in New Guinea played an important part in their post-WWI adaptations and adjustments. This thesis will not analyse the formation of a changed Lutheran identity in Australia, but takes the ambivalent role of the New Guinea mission within this transformation of national and transnational relations after WWI as a starting point to investigate what effect the political positioning of Neuendettelsau during the last years of the Weimar republic had on its Australian partner church.

### **The concept of loyalty and colonial politics**

The internal Lutheran debates focus on the problem of how to maintain a Lutheran identity which is at home in Australia, but transcends national politics. In contrast, the wider community, that is government officials, journalists and historians, have tended to

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<sup>40</sup> An employee of Neuendettelsau, Adam Schuster, who accompanied Director Eppelein to New Guinea and Australia in 1929, observed that the Queensland district was bi-lingual, in Victoria and New South Wales English was used, while only in South Australia German was the official language. Schuster was told that members of the UELCA expected further changes to occur, and that English would soon be exclusively the language of the church. The reasons given to Schuster were the war and its after effects. A. Schuster (NG) 1929 - Im fremden Land und doch daheim. Reiseeindrücke während eines 6 wöchigen Aufenthalts in Australien, ALC NG LMF 56/51.

<sup>41</sup> In order to be allowed to administer the New Guinea mission, the Australian government had insisted on structural changes from loosely connected synods to a more unified church.

discuss the role of Australian Lutherans during both world wars within the concept of 'loyalty'. The debate whether Lutherans were pro-German during WWI, or patriotic and loyal Australians,<sup>42</sup> became more complex in the context of WWII. The central location moved from mainland Australia to the margins of the nation, New Guinea, and the problem of Lutheran loyalty was merged with a separate, but related, debate about the loyalty of Australia's colonial subjects.

One day in the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide I was taken to a bookshelf, and shown the first and second edition of George Johnston's book *New Guinea Diary*. In January 1942 Johnston, mostly known today for his semi-autobiographical novel *My Brother Jack*, went to New Guinea as a war correspondent for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, and the London *Daily Telegraph*. In 1943 Angus and Robertson published his experiences and observations of war in New Guinea as the *New Guinea Diary*. On page 55 Johnston wrote:

The most interesting feature of this advance [up the Markham Valley from Lae] is that certain Lutheran missionaries - of Australian, British or American nationality - have been acting as guides for the Japs, and our guerrillas over the other side are very anxious to meet some of the white traitors.<sup>43</sup>

Mixing elements of truth with rumours and fantasies, Johnston went on to claim that Lutherans were the leaders of 'a little network of Nazi espionage and fifth-column activities', engaged in printing swastika flags and armbands, keeping airstrips ready in case of an Axis invasion, and sending information to the Japanese in the Carolines via a secret transmitter. Johnston added to the theme of 'white Lutheran traitor' that of the 'native traitor':

There are stories of native children in the area round Finschhafen being taught the Nazi salute and the Horst Wessel song. Some of these natives, no doubt, are now acting as guides for the Japs.<sup>44</sup>

Immediately after the publication of the first edition of Johnston's book, the UELCA decided to take legal action, which was successful. The second edition of Johnston's *New Guinea Diary* was printed without the passage on Lutheran traitors guiding the

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<sup>42</sup> See for example Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: internment and the homefront experience in Australia, 1914-1920*, St Lucia, Queensland, 1989; John F. Williams, *German ANZACS and the First World War*, UNSW Press, Sydney 2003.

<sup>43</sup> George Johnston, *New Guinea Diary*, Angus and Robertson LTD Sydney & London, 1943, p. 55.

<sup>44</sup> George Johnston, *New Guinea Diary*, p. 56.

Japanese. Despite this, rumors have persisted, and found their way into numerous publications.<sup>45</sup> In 1984 the National Library published Johnston's original diary, including the section on Lutherans, treason and National Socialism, without any further explanation or critical footnote.<sup>46</sup>

Thirty-five years after the first publication of Johnston's *New Guinea Diary* Hank Nelson tried to disentangle myth and reality in an article entitled 'Loyalties at Sword-Point'.<sup>47</sup> Nelson gave a detailed account of Australian war hysteria and its expression in newspaper reporting, and followed it with an investigation exonerating three German Lutheran Missionaries,<sup>48</sup> who stayed behind in the Huon peninsula during the Japanese occupation. Nelson's answer to the accusations Johnston and other had raised was that the Lutherans were not disloyal to Australia, but a-political and loyal to their religious mission. In this reply Nelson not only put a problematic Lutheran (theological) concept at the centre of his argument, but also indirectly gave validity to the Australian concept of loyalty.<sup>49</sup> Why, I wonder, should German Nationals during WWII in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea occupied by Japanese troops have remained loyal to Australia, or politically neutral?

One of the central concerns implicit in the debate about what European Lutherans did or did not do in New Guinea, of course, is that these men were missionaries. Part of the concerns voiced by Australians about the missionaries' loyalty during the war was their, and their colleagues', behaviour before the war. Had German Lutheran missionaries, or,

<sup>45</sup> See also Peter Ryan, *Fear drive my feet*, Sydney: Angus And Robertson, 1959, pp. 72, 80-82; Alan Powell, *The third force: ANGAU's New Guinea war, 1942-46*, South Melbourne, Vic.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 179-182.

<sup>46</sup> George Johnston, *War Diary 1942*, Sydney, Collins 1984, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> Hank Nelson, 'Loyalties at Sword-Point. The Lutheran Missionaries in Wartime New Guinea, 1939-1945', in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 24:2 (August 1978), pp. 199-217.

<sup>48</sup> Stefan Lehner, Johan Decker and Adolf Wagner.

<sup>49</sup> Some of the argumentation is explained by the article's sources. Unable to read German sources Nelson's main informants for eyewitness accounts were Harold Freund, Emil Wagner and David Rohrlach. Freund, Wagner and Rohrlach had been missionaries before the war—Freund as a member of ELSA, and Wagner and Rohrlach as missionaries for the UELCA. During the Pacific war Freund and Rohrlach had stayed in contact with their German fellow missionaries, as they had been employed in the same area as coast watchers. Correspondence between Nelson, Freund, Wagner and Rohrlach, personal archive Hank Nelson. Personal comments to me by Freund and Rohrlach, 1994, and Hank Nelson. See also A.P.H. Freund, *Missionary turns Spy*, Adelaide 1989, especially pp. 74-76. An edited version of Adolf Wagner's diary was published by his widow Mathilde Wagner in 1964. Thilde Wagner, *Es kommt die Nacht .... aus dem Tagebuch meines Mannes Missionar Adolf Wagner, Neuguinea 1942-43*, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1964. The title uses a biblical quote from John, Chapter 9, Verse 4:

Wir müssen die Werke dessen wirken, der  
mich gesandt hat, solange es Tag ist; es kommt  
die Nacht, da niemand wirken kann.

I must work the works of him that sent me,  
while it is day: the night cometh, when no man  
can work.



for that matter, as Johnston implied, Australian or American Lutherans, indoctrinated New Guineans, so that they were predisposed to collaboration with the Japanese? While the term 'loyalty', and the anxiety about (German) Lutheran traitors are most dominant during the period of WWII, they accompany the period of Australian Administration like a leitmotiv from the beginning, when Australia took over the German colony. In this thesis the first instance of loyalty being examined takes place in 1921 soon after the establishment of New Guinea as a C Mandate of the League of Nations.

In 1947 Kenneth E. (Mick) Read, an Australian anthropologist and during the war member of the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs (DORCA),<sup>50</sup> who had visited the Markham Valley in New Guinea shortly after the Australian army had regained control, set out his observations on the apolitical religious endeavors of Lutheran missionaries, which contained one of the central arguments developed in detail by Nelson three decades later. Sent out by DORCA to investigate the effect of the Pacific War on indigenous people Read reported that a number of German Lutheran Missionaries 'who were suspected of being actively engaged in work for the Nazi Party were interned in Australia',<sup>51</sup> and that administrative officials were 'concerned with the possibility that anti-British propaganda had been disseminated'. While Read conceded that it seemed 'fairly certain that in some areas attempts were made', he dismissed the charge for the area he had visited: 'In Nagarawapum, however, I was unable to elicit any information which pointed to subversive activities.'<sup>52</sup>

While Read thus stayed within the parameters that Europeans in the Mandated Territory were to be at least politically neutral, he formulated a far more radical critique of the demand for loyalty to Australia and Australian rule in regard to New Guineans:

Even granted a maximum humanitarianism in those who govern, it is still conceivable that ... to the governed ... self-determination should seem preferable to outside interference.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> For information on Read and the Directorate see Geoffrey Gray, 'Managing the Impact of War: Australian Anthropology, WWII and the Southwest Pacific', Roy M MacLeod (ed.), *Science and the Pacific War. Science and Survival in the Pacific, 1939-1945*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, pp. 187-210.

<sup>51</sup> For a detailed account of internment of German Lutheran missionaries and a debate about their political alliances see Christine Winter, 'The Long Arm of the Third Reich. Internment of New Guinea Germans in Tatura', *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 2003, pp. 85-108. See also John Perkins, 'The Swastika among the Coconuts: Nazism in New Guinea in the 1930s', Stein Ugelvik Larsen (ed.), *Fascism Outside Europe*, University Press, New York, Columbia, 2001 pp. 287-309.

<sup>52</sup> K.E. Read, 'Effects of the Pacific War in the Markham Valley, New Guinea', *Oceania* Vol. XVIII, no. 2, December 1947, pp. 95-116, quote p. 111.

<sup>53</sup> Read, 'Effects of the Pacific War', p. 97.

Discussing the dilemmas of 'loyalty' the Ngarawapum, a group inhabiting five villages in the Markham Valley, faced during the war, especially during the time of Japanese occupation, Read dismissed the concept as inappropriate:

If we use this term [loyalty] as a basis for moral judgment we imply that the natives' political aims and experience are the same as ours - and there is no more baseless assumption. Value judgments of this kind, nevertheless, are frequently made by the press and the European population. "The British are humanitarian", they reason. "They have the welfare of the natives at heart and have set up an Administration which protects their interest and gives them the benefits of British law. British law and British rule are undoubtedly the best; it would be impossible for us to live under any other system. It is only right that the natives should be grateful to us and willing to support our Administration in favour of any other." This means that we are loyal to our form of government because we consider it best, and that *ipso facto* the native peoples on whom we have forced it should be loyal to it also.<sup>54</sup>

The demand that New Guineans be loyal to Australia was in Read's view a longing for the successful implementation of 'our form of government' as well as a justification for colonial rule. In the light of Read's critique, locating 'disloyal New Guineans' in histories written today, nearly thirty years after the independence of Papua New Guinea, shows a remarkable resilience of narratives about Nation and Empire in Australia.

This thesis will not evaluate the meaning and legitimacy of Australian rule for New Guineans. Rather, it places competing discourses of colonial legitimacy next to each other—the Australian demand for loyalty, and the German desire for a return of 'its former colony'—in order to trace how they affected mission politics. Did Lutheran missionaries, particularly Germans, express a preference for either Australian or German rule? Was the mission—an organisation spanning Germany, Australia, and New Guinea—united in its political outlook? Did Australian and German understandings on what a C-Mandate status meant differ? How did the Australian Administration accommodate German Lutheran missionaries? And, most importantly, how did the rise of nationalism during the late 1920s and early 1930s affect the missionaries, the Administration, and their dealings with each other?

### **Connections and political influences between 'abroad' and 'at home'**

Writing a transnational political history I have—inevitably—been interested in interactions between various groups and organisations across national borders. One

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<sup>54</sup> Read, 'Effects of the Pacific War', p.100.

question in particular followed me through my research and writing. In 1993 Theodor Ahrens suggested that I investigate whether those with outside contacts developed an outsider's view. Did Australian and American Lutherans provide the mission in Germany with information and ways of looking at the rise of National Socialism, which made it possible for the Neuendettelsauer society to develop a different political outlook from other Protestant church organisations in Germany, who were not intimately linked to partners abroad? Very early in my research it became clear that Neuendettelsau had not distanced itself from German nationalism and patriotism, but rather became more and more submerged in it, as the German crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s gained momentum. The question why Neuendettelsau's ecumenical connectedness failed when it provided others such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran theologian and active member of the German resistance, with resources to criticize the development at home, remained puzzling, until I returned to the initial question: Did outside contacts lead to an outsider's view? Trying to make sense of Epplein's defense in 1933 of printing Hitler speeches in the mission journal *Freimund*, I came to see that I had defined the 'outside' too narrowly as 'outside of Germany', and had focused only on criticism of public opinions voiced in Germany. The Lutheran church in Australia was as much a contact abroad for Neuendettelsau, as Neuendettelsau was an outside voice for Australian Lutherans. This thesis thus investigates the role of foreign contacts for the development of political opinions as a two-way exchange, and examines not only how far this exchange led to a change of political views, but also how far it helped to consolidate and strengthen existing political ideas and ideals.

Widening the problem of 'influence' from the investigation of influences on Neuendettelsau to the question of influence by Neuendettelsau opened the way to transform another central line of inquiry.

In a programmatic article the German church historian Friedrich Kantzenbach provided the first tentative analysis of Neuendettelsau's response to National Socialism.<sup>55</sup> On the

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<sup>55</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, 'Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und die Anfänge des Kirchenkampfes', pp. 227-245. *Kirchenkampf* is a term used for the splitting of Protestants into two movements, the so called *Bekennende Kirche*, confessing church, and the *Deutsche Christen*, German Christians. The resistance of the Confessing Church to the German Christians and to the National Socialist state interfering in church matters has often been confused with resistance to the National Socialist regime. Only a minority of the members of the Confessing Church, particularly in Northern Germany, widened their opposition from Church-internal issues to a fundamental political opposition. *Kirchenkampf* is very often a central concept, particularly in church histories which are interested in placing churches and individuals unambiguously on the side of those persecuted by the regime. See also

basis of the published sources of the time, Kantzenbach developed some preliminary working hypotheses and questions and called for further research into the society's ambivalent past, especially during the early years of the National Socialist regime. Kantzenbach, who at the time of the article taught at the theological *Augustana-Hochschule*<sup>56</sup> in Neuendettelsau, was both an outsider and an insider to Neuendettelsau, and familiar with the mission society's traditions.<sup>57</sup> He was particularly disturbed by a lack of serious investigation of what had led to Neuendettelsau's public embrace of National Socialism in 1933, and proposed two possible answers. It was, he said, either the enterprise of *Volks*-mission and Friedrich Epplein's influence, or foreign mission and Christian Keyßer's, which had brought the society to the political position it took. Was there, Kantzenbach asked provocatively, a straight line from Sattelberg, the mission station Keyßer had worked at, to National Socialism?

Kantzenbach's questions still await a thorough answer, and this thesis adds to the debate and deliberations on the causes of Neuendettelsau's political actions.<sup>58</sup> It points to the

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Arno Lehmann, 'Die deutsche evangelische Mission in der Zeit des Kirchenkampfes', *Evangelische Missionszeitschrift*, Jg. 31, Neue Folge, No. 2 May 1974 pp. 53-79 and No. 3 August 1974 pp. 105-128.

<sup>56</sup> The Augustana Hochschule, founded in 1947 is the equivalent of a University, but run independently by the Bavarian church. While it took its inspiration from the first theologic *Hochschule* founded in Bethel in 1905, it is also in some ways an extension of the mission seminary of the Neuendettelsauer society, and stayed closely connected to it. See 'Die Geschichte der Augustana-Hochschule', augustana 2004, <http://www.augustana.de/ahs-2/ahs-2-e.htm>.

<sup>57</sup> Kantzenbach was born in Stettin, and had done his dissertation at the University of Marburg, and his habilitation in Erlangen. From 1958 he was Professor for church history at the Augustana-Hochschule. (1958-1965, and 1968-1982). He had published particularly on Bavarian church history during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including articles on Neuendettelsau's founding father, Wilhelm Löhe. See Schumann, Frank, 'LÖHE, Johann Konrad Wilhelm', BBKL.

<sup>58</sup> In 1968 Helmut Baier's detailed study of the German Christian movement in Bayern was published. References to the Neuendettelsauer mission, however, are sparse, as the author was not given permission to access the mission archive. See Baier, Helmut, *Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns im Rahmen des bayerischen Kirchenkampfes 1933-1945*, Nürnberg 1968. In 1986 a small booklet of 57 pages containing primary sources was published for the use in schools by Kurt-Dietrich Mroßko (*Mission und Drittes Reich. Quellen u. Materialien für d. Unterricht aus d. Neuendettelsauer Mission*, Neuendettelsau Missionskolleg im Missions Jahr 1986). But a volume such as that commissioned by the Neuendettelsauer mission society's sister organisation, the *Diakonie Neuendettelsau*, is still something waiting to be done. The study, undertaken by Christine-Ruth Müller and Hans-Ludwig Siemen, which investigates the organisation's past during the Third Reich, especially the degree of complicity in the killing of disabled people during the so called 'euthenasia' actions, led to a change of wording of the Diakonie's memorial plaque. A summary can also be found on the *Diakonie Neuendettelsau*'s web page. See Christine-Ruth Müller and Hans-Ludwig Siemen, *Warum sie sterben mussten. Leidensweg und Vernichtung von Behinderten aus den Neuendettelsauer Pflegeanstalten im Dritten Reich*, Herausgegeben vom Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte. Verlag Degener&Co., Neustadt/ Aisch, 1991. See also <http://www.diakonieneuendettelsau.de>. The web page of the *Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der lutherischen Kirche*, which today focuses on evangelisation at home as the foreign mission work was taken over by the Bavarian church in 1972, gives no insight into the time of the Third Reich, but a statement by the chairman, Wolfhart Schlichting, implies that the society opposed National Socialism. The society today, Schlichting claims, has an important role of reminding the church to follow its doctrines and stay true to the reformation:

interweaving of the mission abroad and at home, and adds to Kantzenbach's dichotomy the problem of what role relationships with, and work for, Lutheran Diaspora groups of German origin played.

More importantly, however, in the cause of researching this thesis Kantzenbach's suggestions helped me develop a different line of inquiry, which is reflected in the scope and the structure of this thesis. During one talk I gave in the Division of Pacific and Asian History about my research I showed a map with various relevant locations around the world. I had drawn lines between the mission field and the organisations abroad supporting it. Explaining the map and the lines on it, I was reminded of Kantzenbach's poetic metaphor of the 'straight line from Sattelberg into National Socialism', and I became aware that I had followed a line on the map the other way round, namely from Germany to New Guinea. What story would emerge, I asked myself, if I inquired 'the other way round', not looking for the causes of political alliances from within the mission organisation, but for the effects of this political positioning on the actual mission work? What consequences did Neuendettelsau's desire to align itself with the nationalistic right in Germany, particularly the National Socialist regime, have on its relationships and work abroad? Thus, after setting out Neuendettelsau's transnational relationships in regard to its foreign mission work, this thesis traces the society's slow political shifting during the last years of the Weimar republic and the first year of the National Socialist government, and analyses the consequences of this political repositioning for the New Guinea mission.

### **Looking after one's own - the rise of nationalism (1929-1933)**

Making the effects of Neuendettelsau's political alliances the focal point of this thesis had consequences for the time frame. While some developments are traced from 1921 on, the main period of investigation begins in 1929, which was an important turning point both in Germany and in New Guinea.

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Sonst wird die Kirche zum Wetterhahn, der sich nach dem Wind dreht und heute feministisch, gestern sozialistisch, vorgestern nationalsozialistisch und wer weiß wie morgen kräht.

Otherwise the church becomes a weathercock, turning with the wind and crows today feminist, yesterday socialistic, the day before yesterday national socialistic, and god knows what tomorrow.

See Wolfhart Schichting, 'Aufbruch aus Tradition', <http://www.gesellschaft-fuer-mission.de/gesellschaft>.

At the beginning of WWI Neuendettelsau lost control over its only foreign mission field in New Guinea, and American and Australian Lutherans began to look after the 'orphaned' mission. After years of waiting and negotiating with the Australian government, the political change came in 1927, when the Australian Administration decided to let German missionaries stay in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, and to grant entry to new missionaries. In 1928 the first postwar German missionaries trained and sent by Neuendettelsau arrived in New Guinea. One year later Neuendettelsau's formal re-entry into a position of control over the mission field was negotiated between all involved Lutheran partners.

The year 1929 and the onset of the worldwide depression marks in Germany the beginning of the crisis and decline of the Weimar Republic. It was within this economic, social and political crisis that a rapid rise of nationalism—which also affected other Western countries—took place, as well as a slow and steady rise of National Socialism. While Neuendettelsau's dissatisfaction with the Weimar Republic can be traced to the end of WWI and the formation of a new German state, the accelerated and intense crisis of the late 1920s led to a fundamental readjustment of the mission society's political hopes and aims at home and abroad.

In 1933 both developments in New Guinea and in Germany came to a (preliminary) conclusion. The restructure of the Finschhafen mission field was finalised by handing over sole control to the Neuendettelsauer Mission. In Germany the steady erosion of the Weimar Republic ended with the 'coming to power' of the National Socialists, and the Neuendettelsau Mission found itself with the government and form of government it had advocated.

To summarize these critical years with the term 'rise of nationalism' was inspired partially by the way foreign missions looked at worldwide developments during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Reading not only through German Mission Journals, but also international publications, such as the journal of the International Missionary Council, a major focus at the time was on the challenges to Christianity, beyond short-term economic and political crises. Modern secularism, Communism, Atheism and anti-colonial movements combined to create an atmosphere that was seen as unfavourable to the growth of Christianity, particularly in areas where mission fields were located. There, in colonised nations, the development of 'race-consciousness' and 'nationalism'

were identified as a threat to Christianity and foreign missions. The rise of nationalism and 'race consciousness' in Germany, however, provoked mixed responses, ranging from harsh criticism to warm encouragement.<sup>59</sup> German foreign missions especially tended to argue that nationalism and a firm national identity were beneficial to the mission enterprise. The problem of rising nationalism thus goes to the heart of what foreign missions were and wanted to be, and is the overarching theme this thesis explores. Recent developments, particularly after the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, have added an unexpected contemporary urgency to understanding times of crisis and resurgences of nationalism.

### Sources and methodology

This thesis is based on a wide range of sources, particularly on the written sources of the time.

I also conducted many conversations and interviews with members of the Neuendettelsauer mission, none of whom, however, were actively involved in the mission other than as seminarians. During the course of these interviews I found that the majority were far more comfortable when no recording was made. I thus made a few notes during an interview, and prepared—as accurately as memory allowed—a verbatim account afterwards. I soon decided not to use these interviews as sources within the thesis for a number of reasons.

At the launch of the book *Journeyings*<sup>60</sup>, which was largely based on oral testimony, the author, Janet McCalman, told the audience how she had sent typed scripts back to the people she interviewed so that they could add, delete or change what they had said. A debate about ethics and history based on oral testimonies followed, after which I became convinced that especially with a subject so contested as personal attitudes during the Third Reich, I could not quote from any of the interviews without following the same procedure. The form of a verbatim record was a certain hindrance to this undertaking. Reading through my notes in detail, I came to the conclusion that I would use the interviews for my own guidance only, as an aid to alert me to issues, and to challenge me with certain questions.

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<sup>59</sup> For more information see Ustorf, especially pp. 113-124.

<sup>60</sup> Janet McCalman, *Journeyings: the biography of a middle-class generation 1920-1990*, Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1993.

What started primarily as a pragmatic solution to an ethical problem led me to think about the sources I wanted to use further. Narratives told during interviews about the Third Reich often had shifted significantly from positions and opinions I found expressed in documents of the time. The collapse of the Third Reich, denazification in Germany, and public knowledge and debate about crimes of the regime, had in many cases led not only to a re-appraisal of political hopes and ideals, but also to a retelling of past events.<sup>61</sup> Stories got drastically reshaped and reinterpreted. This was also visible in autobiographies and articles written after the end of WWII. Instead of making this shift the subject of my inquiry, I decided to make it the centre of my choice of sources and methodology.

While the shift from 1945 to 1946 was dramatic, smaller alterations and changes occur and occurred all the time. To trace shifts during the late 1920s and early 1930s, likewise a time of crisis and change, needed close reading of documents of that time, of a particular year, of a particular month. I have scrupulously attempted to avoid illuminating events and motivations situated at a specific time by statements written earlier or later. This meant that I did not use autobiographies, apart from Director Eppelein's, which incorporates correspondence and diary notes. I only refer to three talks or interviews, and that in the introduction.

### **Archival collections**

The Second World War and its aftermath have destroyed many collections and archival holdings.

Particularly affected were the files of the Australian Administration of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. Depleted by a volcanic eruption in 1937 in Rabaul, none but some accidental remnants survived the Pacific War, as the Australian National Archive's guide to the holdings explains:

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<sup>61</sup> There were a few exceptions. Some missionaries had never been in favour of National Socialism, and their remembering of past positions, actions and events of themselves and other missionaries very much matched the archival record, especially correspondence. A very small number had continued their admiration for Hitler and National Socialism seemingly unaltered, and even used words and phrases of the movement; some of their stories seemed untouched by time, as if they had been objects safely stored away, to be taken out for me with fresh, unbleached colours, and without marks left by any prior handling.



In early 1942 the Japanese invasion led to the destruction of large quantities of records. The speed of the Japanese advance meant many plans for moving records into safer areas were not able to be realised. ... Of the surviving eight series of records, six relate to mining in the district of Morobe; none cover the general administration of the Territory.<sup>62</sup>

For this thesis I have instead used files from government departments located on the Australian mainland, particularly from the Central Office of the Department of Home and Territories, and the Territories Branch in the Prime Minister's Department, and thus an analysis of what opinions were held by the Administration and what policies were supported is mostly confined to those shared and discussed with these and other departments in Canberra and Melbourne.

All German government and party files are incomplete and sometimes difficult to locate. The collection of government papers from 1933 to 1945 in the Nuremberg state archive for example is stored and indexed under the title 'Nazi remnant files'. What had not been destroyed during the last years of the war by Allied bombing and German officials themselves was taken by Allied agencies and relocated. While many records were handed back to German archives, some are still in Britain, the USA and Russia. Unfortunately many records were taken out of their organisational context and re-filed for use in the denazification of Germany (*Entnazifizierung*).<sup>63</sup> Reunification has led to a rejoining of departmental holdings sometimes divided between east and west, which was just beginning when I conducted most of my German research. The files of the NSDAP's foreign organisation (*Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP*, AO) in Berlin are particularly sparse, and I have not managed to locate any documents relating to Australia or New Guinea. Files of the German foreign office include a small number relating to Australia and the Pacific, but the best insights into matters relating to Australia can be gained through the papers of the German consulate in Sydney. All records left behind in Australia at the beginning of the war were held in trust by the Swiss consuls in Australia, handed over to the Australian authorities in 1945, and later

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<sup>62</sup> See Nagle, Peter (ed.) *Papua New Guinea Records 1883–1942*, National Archives of Australia, April 1998, [http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/research\\_guides/guides/png/introduction.htm](http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/research_guides/guides/png/introduction.htm); also Appendix 4 'A history of the PNG records' by Hilary Rowell, [http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/research\\_guides/guides/png/appendix4.htm](http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/research_guides/guides/png/appendix4.htm).

<sup>63</sup> This is particularly the case with records held at the Document Center in Berlin, until 1994 under American control, and since then part of the Federal German Archives. For more information see Bundersarchiv, 'Das Berlin Document Center (BDC)', [http://www.bundesarchiv.de/aufgaben\\_organisation/abteilungen/reich/00340/](http://www.bundesarchiv.de/aufgaben_organisation/abteilungen/reich/00340/).

repatriated to Germany, and placed in the archives of the foreign office.<sup>64</sup> The family of the late Consul General Dr Rudolf Asmis has also deposited his papers there.

During the 1970s and 1980s Gerhard O. Reitz and Jean F. Reitz prepared a large microfilmed documentation of records relating to the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, and this includes reports, correspondence and other documents held in the archives of the Neuendettelsauer mission in Germany (Archiv des Missionswerkes der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern, Neuendettelsau), the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide, the Archives of the Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, and the archives of the ELC-PNG in Lae. I have made extensive use of the microfilm collection, and have in addition accessed further files in the archives in Neuendettelsau and Adelaide.<sup>65</sup> While the microfilmed documentation has an index neither Lutheran archive has a 'find-book' (summary book of files), and the identification of relevant files was dependent on the co-operation of the respective archivists. To my great surprise the archival collection in Neuendettelsau had interesting gaps. There was, for example, no file on the formation of the special branch of the storm troopers (SA) of which only mission seminarians were members. I have been told about a fire in the yard behind the archives during the late 1960s or early 1970s. This was at a time when, inspired by the Vietnam war, the German student movement started to inquire into the past of their fathers and mothers. Unfortunately I have been unable to gain precise information on this alleged event. The papers held at the Lutheran Archive in Adelaide are extensive, but also at times incomplete. I was informed that Director Theile's papers and files were after his death stored in Julius Stolz' office, where an accidental fire resulted in some losses.<sup>66</sup>

To overcome some of the shortcomings of the mission collections I undertook extensive research in other church archives, particularly the archive of the Council of the German Evangelical Missions in Hamburg (*Deutsche Evangelische Missionshilfe*)<sup>67</sup>, the Archives of the German Protestant Church in Berlin (Evangelisches Zentralarchiv

<sup>64</sup> In 1993 I was fortunate to be allowed to look through three boxes of the German Consulate, which had just been located under the desk of a recently retired archivist in the National Archives in Canberra.

<sup>65</sup> The microfilmed collection, while it is extensive, does not include documents relating to 'home' matters of the missions.

<sup>66</sup> Only part of Theile's papers are held in Adelaide. The other part is in the Lutheran Archives in Lae.

<sup>67</sup> There is no central archive of the Assembly of the German Evangelical Missions (*Deutscher Evangelischer Missionstag, DEMENT*), nor its council *Deutscher Evangelischer Missionsrat (DEMUR)*. Papers remained with the seven members of the council, and I have used the collection of Walther Freytag, director of the *Deutsche Evangelische Missionshilfe*. For further information on the Council and the Assembly see Ustorf, particularly pp. 129-259.

Berlin), and the archives of the Bavarian Lutheran church in Nürnberg, The central archive of the Bavarian church, the *Landeskirchliche Archiv Nürnberg*, and the collections it housed before 1945 came through the war mainly undamaged, but some collections of files incorporated later, for example Karl Steck's papers, suffered partial destruction due to the bombing of the city. The main sources used in this thesis are from the papers of the *Zentralmissionsverein* (Zentralverband für Äußere Mission), and Friedrich Epplein's unpublished autobiography.<sup>68</sup>

When I began my research I had planned to weave a story out of a multitude of sources, but only during the archival search did the extent of this task become clear. While the story is based on much new material, it is still a partial story, limited by the availability of archival records. It is also a story trying to follow connections across organisations and borders. By following these disparate archival holdings it became possible to show, for example, how one person wrote differently to two different partners at the same time, or how several groups responded differently to one event. The past reality of a transnational network is reflected in the sources and the multitude of archives, and I hope that one perception of that has been captured and expressed in this story.

### **The Mandated Territory of New Guinea and its historiography.**

Looking at the history of some of these archival collections and their limitations, it is no surprise that for example no general history of the foreign organisation of the NSDAP has been written. Historians are working in many countries at writing local histories of the National Socialists, piecing together stories from marginal, peripheral sources in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the overall workings of the former center, the AO in Berlin, and its dealings with sub-branches abroad.

Despite a likewise difficult archival situation, the history of German New Guinea, in contrast, has been well covered with a number of major works published in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>69</sup> Strangely there is no single monograph on the Mandated

<sup>68</sup> See Homepage of the *Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg*, <http://www.lkan-elkb.de/>

<sup>69</sup> See Firth, Stewart, *New Guinea under the Germans*, Melbourne 1982; Hempenstall, Peter, *Pacific Islanders under German Rule. A study in the meaning of colonial resistance*, Canberra 1978; Moses, John A. and P. M. Kennedy (eds.), *Germany In The Pacific And Far East, 1870- 1914*, St. Lucia, Qld, University Of Queensland Press, 1977; Sack, Peter (ed.), *German New Guinea. A Bibliography*, Department of Law Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University Canberra 1980. Since the reunification of Germany there has been a resurgence of interest in colonial Germany.

Territory of New Guinea—an obvious oversight in Australian-New Guinean historiography. There are a number of studies published after WWII and before independence on colonial rule and politics in the Mandated Territory,<sup>70</sup> but the small number of general histories since have dealt with New Guinea in connection with Papua, and understandably were able to give little space to the Mandated Territory and the 1920s and 30s.<sup>71</sup> The complexity of politics and colonial rule have nevertheless continued to be examined in studies focusing on particular regions or personalities.<sup>72</sup> My story wants to join these and assist towards a political history of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

### **The Certainties of Hindsight and the High Moral Ground<sup>73</sup>**

A history dealing with political desires and choices which became discredited later will be uncomfortable and may be even painful to individuals involved, and their families. The Neuendettelsauer society is a close-knit community with strong emotional, religious, and family links across time. To allow a maximum scrutiny of my analysis, arguments and conclusions I have therefore given quotations both in the German

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See for example Hiery, Hermann Joseph (ed.), *Die deutsche Südsee 1884-1914: ein Handbuch*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Legge, JD. 1956: *Australian Colonial Policy. A Survey of Native Administration and European Development in Papua*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson; Reed, Stephen Winsor. 1943: *The Making of Modern New Guinea with special reference to Culture Contact in the Mandated Territory*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society; Rowley, CD. 1965: *The New Guinea Villager. A Retrospect from 1964*. Melbourne: FW Cheshire; Rowley, Charles D., *The New Guinea villager: the impact of colonial rule on primitive society and economy*, New York: Praeger, 1966; Stanner, W. E. H. 1953: *The South Seas in Transition. A Study of Post-War Rehabilitation in Three British Pacific Dependencies*, Sydney: Australasian Publishing Company.

<sup>71</sup> See for example Griffin, James, Hank Nelson, and Stewart Firth, *Papua New Guinea: a political history*, Richmond, Vic : Heinemann Educational, 1979; Latukefu, Sione (ed.), *Papua New Guinea: a century of colonial impact, 1884-1984*, Port Moresby : National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea in association with the PNG Centennial Committee, 1989; Nelson, Hank (ed.), *Taim bilong masta : the Australian involvement with Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1982; Waiko, John, *A short history of Papua New Guinea*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993.

<sup>72</sup> See for example Willis, Ian, *Lae: Village and City*, M.U.P., Melbourne 1974. No administrator has written at length. Ronald Ramsey's biography of his father, Walter Ramsey McNicoll, Administrator from 1934 to 1942, has a limited circulation and is revealing but rather a family biography. See Ronald Ramsay McNicoll, *Walter Ramsay McNicoll, 1877-1947*, Melbourne, [The Author], 1973. Many personal histories which deal with politics and administrative structures have been written by or about European members of the Administration, particularly patrol officers, such as Townsend, George W. L., *District Officer; From Untamed New Guinea to Lake Success, 1921-46*, Syd., Pacific Pubs., 1968. These studies differ in insight and range from rather self-serving colonial accounts (McCarthy, John Keith, *Patrol into yesterday: My New Guinea years*, Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1963) to complex cross-cultural examinations. See particularly Gammage, Bill, *The sky travellers: journeys in New Guinea 1938-1939*, Calton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1998.

<sup>73</sup> Some of these considerations are also expressed in Christine Winter, 'Writing History in the Shadow of the Third Reich', *Melbourne Historical Journal*, Special Issue 2001, No. 29 (published 2002), pp. 170-175.

original and in the English translation, and have used only publicly available documents, despite the fact that I was given access to a number of private collections. On one occasion I felt that accessing a particular privately held collection would compromise my research to such a degree that it was preferable to work without it. It not only seemed that I would be allowed to use only pre-selected parts of the papers, but that there was a strong insistence on a certain way of interpreting this material, and that my being allowed to use it depended on staying within these parameters. On another occasion I was generously allowed to borrow material and photocopy, but after the heir of these papers had had a closer look at what was contained in them, he asked me for the sake of other family members, to check with him before I used any of it. As the family's name would not be honoured by some of the ancestor's anti-Semitic ranting, he would prefer to give his relatives the opportunity to prepare themselves. In this case I felt that the use of this material would jeopardise not my research, but possibly his relationship with his family.

In these considerations I have been influenced by Cassandra Pybus' reflections about balancing the biographer's desire to 'tell it all' and ethical and moral dilemmas, particularly the pain and grief of families.<sup>74</sup> Thus I decided to use all private papers in the same way as I used interviews. This had as a consequence the limitation that any story or event I knew of through oral sources or privately held papers, but which could not be told by using publicly accessible documents, is not included in my narrative.<sup>75</sup> The President (*Präses*) of the Australian Lutheran church, Julius J Stolz, for example, wrote a heartfelt letter to Hitler, congratulating him on his election in March 1933. This letter was not shown to me in the Archives in Adelaide, but a photocopy was given to me by a friend. I have not used this letter in my thesis, but instead told the story of the reception of the Third Reich by leading members of the Lutheran church in Australia through other correspondence. Another example is the introduction in 1933 of a new rule for seminarians at Neuendettelsau to become members of the seminary's SA (*Sturm Abteilung, Storm troop*). Interviews indicated that the formation of this group was a compromise by the director, who negotiated a special seminarian SA, instead of having the students incorporated into the regular SA of the district. Unfortunately there was no document about this to be found in the mission archives in Neuendettelsau, nor did I manage to locate any relevant material in the so-called National Socialist remnant

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<sup>74</sup> See Cassandra Pybus, 'Dogs in the Graveyard', *Australian Humanities Review* 1999, <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-December-1999/pybus1.html>.

<sup>75</sup> In most instances material in publicly accessible collections and in private collections addressed the same issues.

archives of the district. All I could find was one picture with a short caption in the mission journal *Freimund*. Unable to illuminate Director Epplein's negotiations or intentions beyond vague speculations, I have instead focused on his editorship of the *Freimund* to debate how National Socialism 'entered' the society.

I am not interested in 'outing' individuals, or in contesting memories, which had their own purpose at a given time. The political history I have written focuses mainly on those people within the mission who had the authority and power to make decisions about the direction the society took. I have also on purpose not compared or juxtaposed the stories, which emerged from my reading of the archival record with memoirs, autobiographies or mission histories.<sup>76</sup> But I should stress that the particular stories are generally illustrations of broader movements, dilemmas and compromises that I have been able to document—and the opportunism, courage and distress of individuals is apparent in the general narrative.

While viewing events in hindsight is admittedly doing so from a comforting position, I have in the circumstances endeavoured to be neither judgemental nor moralistic. The people on whose words and actions this history is based made decisions to the best of their knowledge, and most struggled to do so with integrity. I selected, wrote and structured this history, but I have tried to not insert myself as a judge or jury from a position of privilege. Criticising Neuendettelsau's rejection of parliamentary democracy, which is somewhat disappointing from my perspective, would not only have been anachronistic, but not have helped an understanding of Neuendettelsau's political alliances. I have likewise, for example, refrained from excursions into the validity of Theile's rejection of Pilhofer's critique of the treatment of New Guineans by the Australian Administration and its officers. My primary task was to make both positions understandable by unravelling some of the motivations, which drove both men, and follow some of the consequences of their disagreement.

I have limited this history to an examination of missionaries and government officials of European descent. As this thesis is based on careful textual analysis, my limited language skills did not allow me to widen this political history to include the politics of New Guineans. This transnational history is nevertheless written primarily with the

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<sup>76</sup> Such as for example Georg Pilhofer, *Die Geschichte der Neuendettelsauer Mission in Neuguinea*, Vol. 2, Neuendettelsau, Freimund, 1963.

citizens of three nations in mind, Germany, Australia and New Guinea, who are connected by their shared past. Care for others abroad, and a shared future was very much part of Neuendettelsau’s theological understanding of its mission work, as one of the society’s central biblical mottos shows:

Lass dein Brot übers Wasser fahren, so wirst du es finden nach langer Zeit. <sup>77</sup>	Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.
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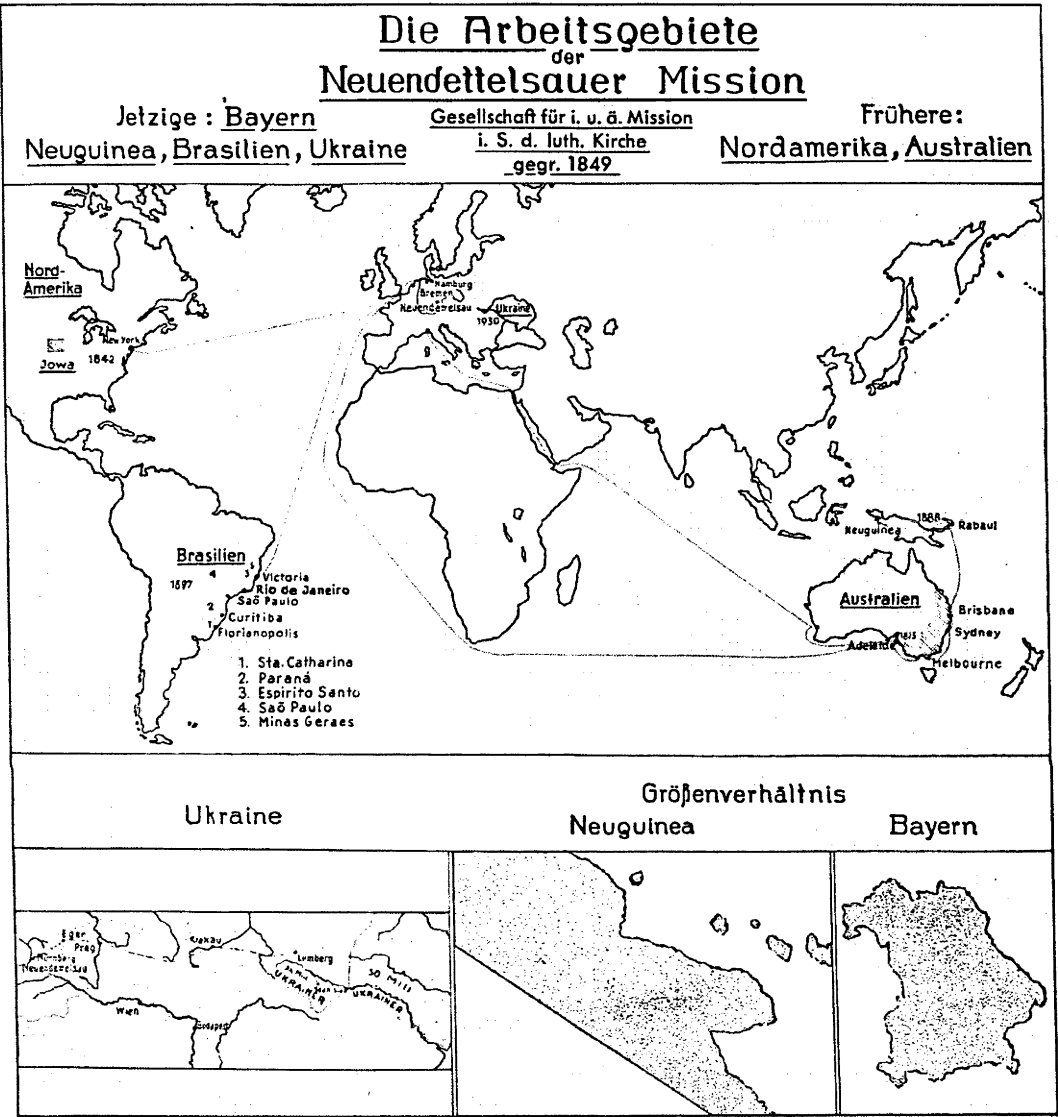
Where the interests of New Guineans were relegated at second or third place after other considerations, I made a point of emphasising this. This is also reflected in the title of the thesis, which is a play on a verse in Paul’s epistle to the Philippians.<sup>78</sup>

und ein jeder sehe nicht auf das Seine, sondern auch auf das, was dem andern dient.	Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
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<sup>77</sup> Ecclesiastes 11, 1. Literally the verse in Luther’s translation reads: Send you bread over the water, and you will find it after a long time.  
<sup>78</sup> Phil 2, 4; see also verse 21.

**Map 1:**  
**The Neuendettelsauer Mission and its Transnational Connections**



Source: Eppelein, Friedrich (ed.), *Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und seine 4 Arbeitsgebiete*. Bericht 1933 der Gesellschaft für Innere und Äussere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche, Neuendettelsau August 1933.



**Table 1:**  
**German Mission Societies in New Guinea**

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Abreviation</i>
Liebenzell Mission	Liebenzeller Mission, (China-Inland-Mission)		(CIM)
Marist Mission, Marists	Maristen, Gesellschaft Mariens	Societas Maristae	SM
Methodist Mission, Australasian Methodist Mission Society, Wesleyan Society, Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia	(Linked to German Wesleyan Churches)		
Mission of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sacred Heart Mission, Holy Heart of Jesus	Kongregation der Missionare vom Heiligsten Herzen Jesu, Hiltruper Mission, Herz-Jesu-Mission	Congregatio Missionariorum Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu	MSC
Neuendettelsau Mission, Lutheran Mission Finschhafen	Neuendettelsauer Mission, Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche e.V.		ND
Rhenish Mission	Rheinische Mission, Barmer Mission		
Society of the Divine Word	Styler Mission, Gesellschaft des göttlichen Wortes, (Kapuziner Mission)	Societas Verbi Divini	SVD
Holy Spirit Fathers, Spiritans, Congregation of the (Servants of) the Holy Ghost.	Missionsgesellschaft vom Heiligen Geist, Spiritaner, Väter vom Heiligen Geiste	Congregatio Sancti Spiritus	CSSp

This table is a selection of the most common names and variations used by archival documents and published sources for those mission societies which worked in the Bismarck Archipelago and Kaiser Wilhelmsland at the beginning of WWI. These missions were initially referred to by the Australian Administration as 'German' missions. Some of these mission operations in the field were, however, only loosely linked to Germany and German motherhouses. Some had a variety of transnational connections, especially to Australia, France, and Switzerland. Note also that mission societies such as the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were part of a wide family of related organisations and sub-organisations.

# **I**

## **Reorganising the Mission**

## Orphaned German Missions – The Mandated Territory of New Guinea and the restructuring of German Missions after 1920

The outbreak of war and the occupation of New Guinea by Australian troops in 1914 had cut off the Neuendettelsauer mission personnel and all other German Protestant and Catholic missions working in the Germany colony from their motherhouses based in Germany.<sup>1</sup> After the end of WWI these German ‘orphaned’ missions shared two major problems in the control and management of their mission fields, which remained unsolved even after the signing of the peace treaty of Versailles, and the creation of a C Mandate of the League of Nations, administered by Australia. The first was the legal status of mission property and connected economic enterprises; the second, even more urgent one, was the question of the future of German staff already in New Guinea, and whether new German mission personnel would be permitted to enter New Guinea. The Lutherans in Australia, who as an emergency measure had taken over the control of the orphaned missions of the Rheinische and Neuendettelsauer societies at the outbreak of WWI, and were now negotiating on their German brethrens’ behalf, had the added burden of hostile opinions and attitudes towards them, which found their bureaucratic expression in unfavourable security dossiers. Compiled during WWI, these files were consulted regularly during the internal deliberations of the various departments involved in deciding the future of German missions in the Territory of New Guinea.<sup>2</sup> In the heated climate of the immediate post war years, characterised by mass-deportations of Germans<sup>3</sup>, the Australian Lutherans, as did other mission organisations, opted for direct negotiations with the Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes.<sup>4</sup> But Hughes was certainly

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1 An exception was the Methodist mission, which had an Australian superintendent, William Henry Cox, and strong links directly to Australia. For an overview of mission societies see John Garrett’s three volumed history of Christianity in Oceania: *To live among the stars: Christian origins in Oceania*, Suva: University of the South Pacific, Institute of Pacific Studies, 1982; *Footsteps In The Sea: Christianity In Oceania To World War II*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific in association with World Council of Churches, 1992; *Where nets were cast: Christianity in Oceania since World War II*, Suva, Fiji; Geneva, Switzerland: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific in association with World Council of Churches, 1997. The German mission societies were referred to in Australian documents with their English name. See Table: German Mission Societies in New Guinea.

2 See for example NAA, A 367, 1917/612 for some of the security reports; see correspondence from September to November 1923 between Page (acting Prime Minister), Department for Home and Territories and the Investigation Branch for the influence of these files in NAA, A1, 1925/20653; see also NAA, A518, C838/1 Pt. 1.

3 See Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy aliens*, 1989.

4 William Morris (Billy) Hughes, a barrister by profession, had been a member of federal parliament from the beginning of Federation in 1901. From 1915 to 1923 he was Prime Minister of Australia.

not immune from the general hostility to Germany and Germans, and he had during the peace negotiations and the setting up of the League of Nations pushed most aggressively for Australian sovereignty in New Guinea.<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Otto Theile, who acted as Australian Director of the New Guinea Missions, and was described in the files on Lutherans as a traitor, spy, devious and cunning, repeatedly had difficulties in getting access to Hughes. Finally, in March 1921, Reverend Friedrich Richter, President of the American Iowa Synod, a partner of the Australian Lutherans in supporting the New Guinea Missions, managed on his visit to Australia—with the help of Theile's local Member for Parliament<sup>6</sup>—to secure an interview for Theile and himself.

For some years a number of Lutheran Synods and churches in Australia, mainly the Evangelical Lutheran Church Federation of Australia and the General Synod, had been negotiating closer ties with each other. Pastor Theodor Hebart from South Australia, who was 40 at the time of Richter's visit, recalled in his church history, written in 1938, that the desire for greater unity was an outcome of surviving the harassment by 'hatred, slander, and war-time laws'.<sup>7</sup> The prospect of negotiating with government the future of the Lutheran Missions in New Guinea made the involved churches and synods shift from a planned federation to actual amalgamation. Hebart recalled:

It was recognized by all that a single united church body could approach the Government with more prospect of success than a loose federation of synods.<sup>8</sup>

On 21 March 1921, 'a day bathed in sunshine', delegates from South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, came together at the local Lutheran church at Ebenezer, north of Nuriootpa in South Australia, to form the *United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (UELCA)*. Richter, as guest of honour and impartial outsider, chaired the meeting during which all necessary resolutions were passed, including the resolve that the new church would take over the New Guinea Missions in conjunction with the Iowa Synod. Thus just before the all important, long awaited meeting with the Prime Minister, Otto Theile, one of the two Queensland representatives, received added legitimacy for his endeavour to look after the orphaned

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<sup>5</sup> See for example William Morris Hughes, Speech in House of Representatives, 10 September 1919, Parliamentary Debates, Vol LXXXIX, pp. 12163-79.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Wienholt; see NAA, A518, C838/1 Pt. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Hebart, *The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia. Its history, activities and characteristics, 1838-1938*, Lutheran Book Depot, North Adelaide 1938 (Facsimile edition 1985), p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Hebart, p. 136.

German missions through the backing of a greater united Australia-wide Lutheran church.<sup>9</sup>

The political situation had also only recently been formally settled. In March 1921, when Richter and Theile negotiated with Prime Minister Hughes, New Guinea's status as a C Mandate under Australian Administration had been ratified by the League of Nations for just three months.<sup>10</sup> Thus the negotiations took place at a time of transition, where emotions of hatred and mistrust sat side by side with a desire to turn towards the future and organise affairs in New Guinea, now formally a Mandate under Australian rule. During the somewhat tense and curt discussions Hughes agreed in return for the gradual replacement of German missionaries by Australian and American born staff<sup>11</sup> and individual declarations of loyalty to Australia, to grant a bridging time of five years for German personnel. After further discussions with the Catholic Missions, who also had a great number of German missionaries in their employ, this was increased to seven years. In addition children of German missionaries were free to attend Australian schools, German personnel would be allowed to spend time in Australia for furlough<sup>12</sup>, and four German-Lutheran brides, who had waited in Germany to join their husbands-to-be since 1914 were to be permitted to come to New Guinea.<sup>13</sup>

In July 1921 the Administrator was instructed to 'obtain from all the German missionaries in the Territory the required undertaking, that they "will be loyal to the

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9 Hebart, pp. 136f. Hebart also points out that the formation of the UELCA overcame the disintegration of Lutheranism into many factions. From 1921 on only two Lutheran churches existed in Australia, namely the UELCA and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (ELSA). See also Gordon Gerhardt, 'Some specific observations on Partnership Involving the Australian Church', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 87.

10 On 28 June 1919 with the signing of the peace treaty of Versailles Germany had renounced all rights over her overseas possessions, including German New Guinea. The issuing of the Mandate was delayed until 17 December 1920 when its terms were settled and the Mandate itself did not reach Australia until 6<sup>th</sup> April 1921. The following day, the Governor General issued a Proclamation bringing the New Guinea Act into force on 9 May 1921. From that date, the Military Administration ceased and Civil Administration was established throughout the territory of New Guinea. See for example S.S. Mackenzie, *The Australians at Rabaul. The Capture and Administration of the German Possessions in the Southern Pacific*, University of Queensland Press in assoc. with the Australian War Memorial, St Lucia 1987 (first published 1927). [Series: The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, vol. 10.].

11 Like their Australian colleagues, American Lutherans were under suspicion by Australian government agencies of being close to Germany; to restrict visas to American-born people was meant to stop Germans coming in via the back-door of naturalisation in America.; see NAA, A518, C 383/1 Pt. 1; also for example NAA, A5, NG 1924/1823 and A5, NG 1924/1994.

12 See also for example NAA, A5, NG 1924/2106; A1, 1925/17744.

13 15.3.1921 protocol of meeting; 24.3.1921 Richter and Theile to Prime Minister Huges; 26.3.1921 and 18.4.1921 Richter to Huges in NAA, A518, C838/1 Pt 1. The file also contains the responses of other mission societies.

Government of the Territory and will not take part in political movements or stir up civil strife." The Administrator was assured that Theile and the Australian Lutheran Board for Foreign Missions (BFM) would remove disloyal missionaries from the territory of New Guinea.<sup>14</sup> The demand for loyalty was a significant shift from Australia's approach to German missionaries during the war, when the prerequisite for remaining in New Guinea was an oath of neutrality.

When Australian troops occupied German New Guinea in 1914 German missionaries had been granted the same conditions as German civilians and members of the forces whose 'usual occupation' was civil. The conditions of capitulation were very favourable for the Germans at this early stage of the war, before prolonged fighting, and immense casualties eroded any good will towards the enemy.<sup>15</sup> All Germans who were not part of the German Regular Forces 'on taking an oath of neutrality for the duration of the present war' were released and permitted to 'return to their homes and ordinary avocations'.<sup>16</sup> Of the German Lutheran missionaries only three refused to give the oath of neutrality, and were subsequently deported from New Guinea and interned in Australia. All other members of the mission were allowed to stay and continue their work.

With New Guinea becoming a Mandated territory, conditions changed, and the majority of German settlers were deported from New Guinea back to Germany. The future of other Germans, particularly missionaries, however, still remaining in the former German colony was subject to negotiations and compromises. The legal situation of people residing in any of the new mandates had been a point of debate and disagreement from 1919 on, and continued for some years after the foundation of the League of Nations and its mandate system.<sup>17</sup> Intertwined with questions about the status

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<sup>14</sup> See 19.7.1921 Memorandum Prime Minister's Department for The Administrator, Rabaul. NAA, A1, 1925/20653.

<sup>15</sup> Hiery has argued that the outcome of the capitulation in New Guinea was further partly due to the personality of the negotiating German official, acting Governor Eduard Haber, partly it was a response to unexpected military resistance by German and New Guinean troops. See Hermann Joseph Hiery, 'Der erste Weltkrieg und das Ende des deutschen Einflusses in der Südsee', Hiery, Hermann Joseph (ed.), *Die Deutsche Südsee 1884-1914. Ein Handbuch*, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn 2001, online edition: <http://www.uni-bayreuth.de/departments/neueste/EndedEinfluss.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> 17.9.1914 Terms of Capitulation of German New Guinea, see S.S. Mackenzie, *The Australians at Rabaul*, pp. 82-85, quote p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> The question of citizenship of 'natives' of New Guinea and other mandates was in the end to some extent resolved by the League's Permanent Mandates Commission by disallowing mass naturalisation, but making it permissible for individuals to acquire citizenship of the respective Mandatory. See for

of inhabitants of Mandates was a debate between the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission and representatives of the Mandatories on how to deal with Germans still present in former German colonies. Opinions differed on whether to repatriate them or allow them to stay. Could conditions be attached, such as enforced naturalisation? The Permanent Mandates Commission, granting an exemption to South Africa for collective naturalisation of Germans in Southwest Africa, decided that overall Germans living in mandates would not and should not automatically lose their German nationality.<sup>18</sup> Hughes made it clear to Theile and Richter, that he favoured the deportation of all Germans, and that the removal of all German missionaries was his ultimate aim. The compromise he made of granting an extension to the missionaries was to allow an orderly handing over of knowledge and control, and thus an interim solution half way between the model of repatriation he favoured and that of naturalisation that other Mandatories, particularly South Africa, had argued for. Hughes accepted Theile's and Richter's argument that this interim period was in everybody's interests, namely that of New Guineans, the missions and the new Australian Administration in New Guinea. The hand-over phase also allowed the Australian government to wait and see how related legal and practical problems were solved by the League of Nations, and by Britain and the rest of the Empire.

Hughes' solution to bridge the ultimate deportation of all Germans with declarations of loyalty to Australia reflected a particular understanding of the Mandate given by the League of Nations, as well as wider anxieties of Australia about the security of its northern borders, and the preservation of a White Australia.

The establishment of the League of Nations (1920-1946) was interwoven with the political negotiations after WWI, and its covenant was included in the Treaty of Versailles and the other peace treaties. Article 22 of this covenant dealt with the administration of former Turkish territories and former German colonies. As the peoples involved were judged to be 'not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world' they were a 'sacred trust of civilisation' to be governed by 'advanced nations' as mandates of the League of Nations.<sup>19</sup> Three

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example Quincy Write, *Mandates under the League of Nations*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1930, pp. 522-529.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Quincy Write, *Mandates under the League of Nations*, pp. 522-529.

<sup>19</sup> The Charter of the United Nations took up the League of Nations' Mandate-system, transforming it into 'trusteeship'. Chapter 12 and 13 of the Charter were far clearer on the obligation to advance these

categories of mandates were established. The territory of New Guinea, to be administered by Australia was classified as a 'C Mandate', as were all former German colonies in the Pacific.<sup>20</sup> While the covenant's formulation for A and B mandates focused solely on the "stage of development" of the respective territories, C mandates were classified according to 'the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographic contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances'. The various and inconsistent criteria listed reflected a political compromise made by the League.

Already in 1916, two years after Australia had taken over de facto rule in New Guinea, the journalist C. Brunsdon Fletcher wrote in his book, *The New Pacific*, endorsed by Prime Minister Hughes:

the people of Australia and New Zealand look upon the German New Guinea Protectorate and German Samoa with very different eyes to-day from what they did in the beginning of 1914. Their representatives hold these possessions for the Allies, but they have begun to think of them now as British.<sup>21</sup>

In return for greater control over their mandates—C Mandates were 'best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as an integral part of their territory'—South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Japan were persuaded to agree to the mandate system instead of simply annexing the territories occupied by them in WWI.<sup>22</sup> This compromise gave enough control over New Guinea to satisfy Australia's strategic and commercial interests, which Hughes had made unmistakably clear during the negotiations at Versailles.<sup>23</sup> Yet while it allowed Australia internationally recognised possession of New Guinea, the mandate also brought with it international scrutiny. Australia had to govern New Guinea according to the terms of the mandate, and had to

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territories toward self-government, and that the territories were held in trust ultimately for their inhabitants, than Article 22 of the League of Nations, which comprises ambiguous and contradictory formulations. See Charter of the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>.

20 In addition only South-West Africa, (since 1990 Namibia), which was administered by South Africa, was a C Mandate.

21 C. Brunsdon Fletcher, *The New Pacific. British Policy and German Aims*, Macmillan and Co limited, London 1917, p. VII.

22 This Argument was for example made by F. S. Joelson, *Germany's claims for Colonies*, London, Hurst and Blackett Ltd. 1939, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, p. 61.

23 One central point was the importance Hughes gave New Guinea for a successful continuation of proper immigration control and the upkeep of the White Australia policy. New Guinea, Hughes told Woodrow Wilson, was for Australia a 'frontier question'. Hank Nelson, 'Defining the Nation: Australia and the Near-North 1920-1942', Winter Lectures, 2 August 2001, St Hilda's College, University of Melbourne, p. 4; quoting W.J. Hudson, *Billy Hughes in Paris: The Birth of Australian Democracy*, Nelson, Melbourne 1978, pp. 98-9. See also for example Heather Radi, 'New Guinea under Mandate 1921-41', in W.J Hudson (ed.), *Australia and Papua New Guinea*, Sydney University Press 1971, p. 74.



deliver an annual report to the League's Permanent Mandates Commission. Anxious over potential international criticism, Australia tended to err on the side of caution, especially when interpreting Article 22,<sup>24</sup> which restricted Australia's military and naval presence in New Guinea. The 'prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of the territory' was read to mean that no military or naval bases were allowed. And while the property of German traders and plantation owners was speedily expropriated, and replaced by Australian ownership, the majority of whom were ex-servicemen, Australian bureaucracy was slow to change German laws and regulations, especially those dealing with matters directly affecting indigenous people, and German missionaries were given extensions, while their case was considered and re-considered. The removal of Germans had to be balanced with the guaranteed 'freedom of conscience and religion'.<sup>25</sup>

The extension of Australia's reward scheme for ex-service men, the soldier resettlement scheme, to New Guinea was a gesture which looked like an expression of utter confidence—New Guinea, Australia's booty of war, was to remain with the Commonwealth of Australia indefinitely—but was also an admission of deep unease. The decision to establish no military or naval bases left Australia's northern frontier uncomfortably vulnerable. Hank Nelson has detailed the domination of ex-servicemen not only amongst plantation owners, but also amongst government officials, including all three administrators. 'Rabaul was consciously a "suburb of Anzac"'.<sup>26</sup> The presence of ex-servicemen as a kind of substitute for proper military presence also brought Australians to the territory, the sort of Australians who had proven their loyalty to the nation, and who 'could be relied upon to Australianise New Guinea'.<sup>27</sup> Yet paradoxically a successful Australinisation created its own doubts: Did a shift of loyalty of the 'natives', who in contrast to mainland Australia outnumbered the settlers, confirm Australia's superior qualities as colonisers and rulers, or the shifty and treacherous character of New Guineans? Could what happened to Germany also happen to Australia?

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24 For an online edition of the Covenant of the League of Nations and related documents, see The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/leagcov.htm>.

25 The Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 22, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/leagcov.htm>.

26 Hank Nelson, 'Defining the Nation', p. 5.

27 Hank Nelson, 'Defining the Nation', p. 5.

The compromise of establishing 'C-Mandates' within the Mandate System created an ambiguous concept. While C-Mandates promised complete control to the Mandatory, the general formulations introducing Mandates and their purpose, such as 'tutelage', 'development ... on behalf of the League' all pointed to obligations to advance indigenous peoples and implied something less than permanent control.<sup>28</sup> Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Australia kept a close and nervous watch not only on German private or official demand for a return of its former colonies, but also on developments which indicated a weakening of the League of Nations or possible changes to the Mandate System, like the departure of Japan from the League, or Italy's annexation of Abyssinia.

The presence of Germans in New Guinea with particular closeness to indigenous peoples remained a point of anxiety for Australia, and the declarations of loyalty only partially ameliorated that unease. Yet, as time went on, it became clear that by deferring the expulsion of all Germans, a small window of political 'opportunity' had been missed by the Australian government. In July 1925, after repeated requests from concerned church and mission organisations, especially the Anglican Australian Board of Missions (ABM),<sup>29</sup> Cabinet decided that German Missionaries would be allowed to stay in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. This revoked the earlier decision by Hughes, which would have seen all German missionaries removed by 1928. Brigadier-General Evan A. Wisdom, the Administrator of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea at the time, was opposed to this Cabinet decision. While he was pleased with the co-operation of all mission organisations in the Territory, he thought the individual German missionaries to be bitter and doubted their loyalty to Australia. But he remarked pragmatically that as Germany was on the brink of joining the League of Nations, any decision about the future of German missionaries in the Territory would soon be taken out of the hands of Australian authorities anyway<sup>30</sup>: missionaries whose

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28 Article 22 begins: To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the formance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

29 Most representations made came from Anglican clergy and organisations, but some were also from Catholic missions, and from Friedrich Otto Theile for the UELCA. For details see NAA, A1, 1925/19609.

30 9.7.1925 General Wisdom to Secretary, Home and Territories, National Archives, NAA, A1, 1925/19609; see also 1.5.1924 General Wisdom to Secretary, Home and Territories. Wisdom complained about the lack of preparation by mission societies for the change of personnel in 1928. It is evident from

nation was a member of the League of Nations had the right to reside and work unhindered in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.<sup>31</sup> Finally, in 1927, one year after Germany entered the League of Nations, Germans were allowed to come again to New Guinea.<sup>32</sup>

While the future of German mission personnel thus remained unclear until 1927, the issue of Mission Property took even longer to resolve, and hinged on the interpretation of §438 of the Peace Treaty of Versailles.

The Allied and Associated Powers agree that where Christian religious missions were being maintained by German societies or persons in territory belonging to them, or of which the government is entrusted to them in accordance with the present Treaty, the property which these missions or missionary societies possessed, including that of trading societies whose profits were devoted to the support of missions, shall continue to be devoted to missionary purposes. In order to ensure the due execution of this undertaking the Allied and Associated Governments will hand over such property to boards of trustees appointed by or approved by the Governments and composed of persons holding the faith of the Mission whose property is involved.

The Allied and Associated Governments, while continuing to maintain full control as to the individuals by whom the Missions are conducted, will safeguard the interests of such Missions.

Germany, taking note of the above undertaking, agrees to accept all arrangements made or to be made by the Allied or Associated Government concerned for carrying on the work of the said missions or trading societies and waives all claims on their behalf.

Being faced with the new concept of Mandated Territories the departments involved with these issues, External Affairs, Home and Territories, and Attorney General's, delayed decisions and waited instead for guiding solutions from other ex-German colonies within the British Empire, especially Tanganyika and Kenya.<sup>33</sup> By 1922 it was decided that German mission property which was under the custodianship of the public trustee—until 1923 with the department of External Affairs, and then with the Department of Home and Territories<sup>34</sup>—could and should indeed be given to boards of trustees, who had the same faith as the respective German mission, and who would have to use the property for mission work only. Until the boards were legally constituted the mission property remained under the control of the Administrator. The *German Missions Ordinance 1926 of New Guinea* finalised the setting up of boards of trustees

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his correspondence that he favoured an earlier removal of German missionaries from New Guinea, and regarded the 7 year bridging period as a mistake.

31 For the 1925 Cabinet decision see NAA, A1, 1925/19609.

32 See Herwig Wagner, 'Beginnings at Finschhafen', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 57.

33 Mission representatives were in general first asked to wait until the terms of the Mandate were finalized, and then until civil administration was established; for information on decisions within the British empire, especially Tanganyika and Kenya, see for example NAA, A11804, 1921/284; A1, 1925/20653; A5, NG 1924/2152.

34 See NAA, A1, 1925/20653.

to control the property of all missions formerly controlled by German mission societies. The members of the board of trustees for the former Rheinische and Neuendettelsauer missions, which were treated as one amalgamated organisation, the Lutheran Missions New Guinea, were all members of the board for foreign mission (BFM) of the UELCA, which ensured the church's control over the Lutheran missions.<sup>35</sup> While all members of the newly established boards had to be approved by the Administrator, right of nomination of later replacements or changes of board members of the four Catholic missions was given to the Apostolic Delegate, while the three Protestant missions had no right of nomination, and continued to depend on the Administrator's approval.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the Lutherans, who continued to be identified with Germany, the Catholic missions were seen as transcending national boundaries.

The setting up of boards of trustees, which secured control of mission property, and the permission for German mission staff to begin or continue work in New Guinea led to the anticipation that more changes were to come. Thus the involved churches and mission boards in Australia, America and Germany started negotiations about how to restructure the Lutheran Missions in New Guinea. They resolved that all parties would meet in May 1929 to work out a new agreement.

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35 The members of the board of Trustees for the Lutheran Missions were Friedrich Otto Theile (chairman), Johann Julius Stolz, Johannes War, Simpfendoerfer, Carl Martin Ludwig Doehler, Anton Hiller, Schreiber, Mickan and Gustav Krueger. The latter three were lay members of the UELCA, all others were clergy. See for example 28.9.1939 Memorandum 'German Missions Property', Prime Minister's Department, NAA, A518, A846/6/242 Pt. 1.

36 See NAA, A518, B838/1 Pt 1 & 2; see especially 21.4.1933 Minute, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department. Reviewing the Ordinance of 1926 the department commented that the Protestants' lack of right of nominations 'may or may not constitute a disadvantage'. (NAA, A518, B838/1 Pt. 2). For as long as the ordinance was in place the Administrator in fact never resorted to his de facto veto-right, but the regulation is an indication of ongoing unease about the political loyalty of the Protestant missions, as well as the Australian Lutherans (UELCA).

## Director Eppelein's Journey to the Brisbane Negotiations

Without any presupposition one does not arrive at any insights.

*Ohne jede Voraussetzung kommt man überhaupt nicht zu Erkenntnissen*

Friedrich Eppelein, 15 March 1929

Friedrich Eppelein, a Lutheran ordained pastor, had been working for the Neuendettelsauer Mission since April 1926, first as *Inspektor für Volksmission*, and since April 1928 as director.<sup>37</sup> During this time he had undertaken official travels in Germany and some neighboring countries<sup>38</sup>, but his journey in 1929 to the Brisbane negotiations, which included a visit to New Guinea and Palestine, was his first exposure to grand distances and profound human differences.<sup>39</sup> Eppelein's first major official travel, which took just over one year, served to introduce him to a number of locations and partners abroad, and was a kind of initiation into the new duties and responsibilities the 41 year-old was to face as the mission's new director. After his return to Germany in March 1930 Eppelein repeatedly referred to this journey and his experiences in talks and publications. While the trip no doubt gave Eppelein many new insights, more importantly it gave him a legitimacy as director he had previously lacked.

From the start, tensions had arisen between Eppelein as Neuendettelsau's new man for the *Volksmission*, and mission inspector Karl Steck, who had been working for the society since 1909 and was the man everybody thought would most likely succeed mission director Rudolf Ruf. Steck had initiated the implementation of the 'Keyßer method' in New Guinea in 1915 and had since his return to Germany after WWI argued for reform of the Neuendettelsauer Mission society and the Lutheran church at home along the lines of the 'Keyßer method'.<sup>40</sup> 'Living congregations' and decision-making at the grass-roots level, Steck admonished Eppelein, could not be achieved with traditional methods, such as evangelisation or weekend-retreat courses, but only through radical change. Pastors and bishops had to be told they were working in a completely wrong way. Reflecting on his life's work in 1961 Eppelein recalled—not

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37 16.4.1926-3.4.1928 *Inspektor für Volksmission*; 3.4.1928-15.10.1945 *Missionsdirektor*, see *Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein*, LKAN, Manuscripts, Ms 1302/24-a-k.

38 For example in September 1926 to Alsace-Lorraine, and in August 1928 to Basel, see *Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein*, Vol. IIa pp. 9 and 21.

39 From 1 March 1929 to 21 March 1930. His trip to North America to take part in the 'Colombo negotiations' only took one and a half months, from 25 April to 11 June 1932; another official visit to Galicia in 1935 only lasted for 9 days. See *Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein*, Vol. I p. 99.

40 See Fontius.

without some bitterness—his conflict with Steck and the resulting tensions within the Neuendettelsauer mission society.

Karl Steck ... erklärt mir: ...'Bei deiner Art, Volksmission zu treiben kommt gar nichts heraus'. Missionsinspektor August Zahn sekundierte ihm und Missionsinspektor Christian Keyßer schwieg.  
41

Karl Steck ... tells me: ...'Your way of doing Volksmissionising will lead to nothing.' Mission inspector August Zahn assisted him, while mission inspector Christian Keyßer stayed silent.

Because of these escalating tensions within the society, particularly between Steck and mission director Rudolf Ruf, both Ruf and Steck resigned their positions with Neuendettelsau and moved on to work for the Bavarian church; Eppelein was appointed director as a compromise candidate.<sup>42</sup>

Before Eppelein's journey in 1929, when it came to arguing what direction was best for the future of Neuendettelsau, people such as Steck, Zahn and Keyßer had a trump card Eppelein was lacking—first hand knowledge of the 'mission field'. And while Eppelein's predecessor, Rudolf Ruf, also had never visited the mission in New Guinea, at least he had family tradition on his side. His father had been connected with and was supported by the Löhe circle. Eppelein's legitimacy, in contrast, rested solely with his appointment as director, backed up neither by family connections nor first hand personal mission experience (other than that of Volksmission and evangelisation in Germany).

In his autobiography Eppelein summarized the steps which had made him become actively involved with foreign mission work. Using Pietistic theological language and concepts Eppelein narrated a chain of 'callings', from the more distant, external ones to the ultimate internal one which was his journey.<sup>43</sup> Eppelein had heard God's 'calling' in

41 Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIa, p.10. Eppelein's 1961 recollections of the bitter infighting, which led to Rudolf Ruf's resignation as director and Steck's leaving Neuendettelsau in 1928 were coloured also by his disappointment after his denazification in 1945, and what he perceived as a lack of support by the leaders of the Bavarian church. Eppelein's bitterness extended to comments in his autobiography such as Steck being eager and gifted, but heretical in regard to theological ideas about congregations:

Und ich habe manchmal schwer daran getragen, daß man ihn zum Kirchenrat befördert hat während man mich einen schlechten Theologen scholt.

And sometimes it was hard for me to bear, that he was promoted to 'Kirchenrat', while I was chastised and called a bad theologian.

Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIa, p. 11.

42 See for example Fontius pp. 187-205. Fontius details the crisis in the Neuendettelsauer Mission from 1920 to 1928, with Steck's demands for reform at the centre. See also Walther Ruf, *Die Familie Ruf in Neuendettelsau*, [Nürnberg 1986], pp. 44-46.

43 Personal experience of the call of God is important to Pietists.

several ‘testimonies’, namely a talk of missionary widow Justine Vetter he had attended in Bayreuth in 1912, talks by Neuendettelsauer missionaries during his time as pastor of the congregation Bayreuth-Altstadt, and conversations with colleagues in Neuendettelsau, particularly Christian Keyßer from 1926 on. In contrast to all these ‘callings’ through others ‘bearing witness’, Eppelein’s journey was his calling through experience, which enabled him to pass the calling to others:

Ich habe ihn [den Ruf zum Dienst der Heidenmission and den Papua in Neuguinea] vor allem vernommen aus den Erfahrungen meiner Informationsreise aus das Missionsfeld in Neuguinea (1929/1930).<sup>44</sup>

I have above all heard it [the call into service to work for foreign missions to the Papua in New Guinea] through the experiences of my information-gathering journey to the mission field in New Guinea (1929/1930).

His one-year travel gave Eppelein the opportunity to gain ‘experience’, and with it after his return to Germany an added authority to his decisions and views. Whether he himself underwent a series of transformations during his trip is difficult to assess. Eppelein himself rejected the idea of observations being free of pre-conditioned ideas or experiences. On a starry night standing under the Southern Cross on the deck of the ship listening to music from the ship’s gramophone, emotions overwhelmed Eppelein. In his diary he went on to write about God’s creation, and that Christian thought was based on the assumption of truth. From there he expanded into life and reality in general:

Es gibt keine Voraussetzungslosigkeit dem Weltgeschehen gegenüber, keine Voraussetzungslosigkeit bei der Beurteilung der schlichtesten Wahrnehmung und des einfachsten Lebensvorgangs. Ohne jede Voraussetzung kommt man überhaupt nicht zu Erkenntnissen.<sup>45</sup>

There is no freedom from presupposition in regard to events of the world, no freedom from presupposition in regard to evaluating the plainest observations or the simplest events of life. Without any presupposition one does not arrive at any insights.

Exposed to new experiences as a traveller, Eppelein was keen to keep what he regarded as true and worthwhile, and incorporate everything ‘new’ into it. His professional training added to this desire. As a *Volksmissionar*, evangelist, he had the professional habit of looking for examples and stories to utilise in talks, sermons and essays. Many of his observations, reflections and small stories in his diary later found their way into print and into drafts for home-mission talks.<sup>46</sup> Their repeated use transformed them into sets of illustrative arguments. Reading the excerpts from Eppelein’s diary included in

44 Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIb, p. 353.

45 Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIa, p. 36

46 See for example Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIb, p. 353; Talk on 16.6.1930 during mission festival in Nuremberg, mentioned by Eppelein, Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIb, p. 402. *Freimund* 5.6.1930 No. 23 ‘Erträge meiner Neuguineareise für die Neuendettelsauer Heidenmission’.

his autobiography gives the impression that Epplein was already formulating illustrations and examples for later use. But this might be a distortion of the original diaries, as the assembling of primary documents within his autobiography occurred after decades of missionary use of these texts. Certainly Epplein travelled with a purpose and with a view to return to Germany. He was the new director of the Neuendettelsauer Mission on his inaugural journey to the mission field. Yet along the way from Germany to New Guinea he was also crossing for the first time in his life into the sphere of the British Empire, and frequently strong patriotic statements appeared between more religious and church-political reflections and observations.<sup>47</sup> Rather than being taken outside Germany, and gaining new perspectives by seeing German politics from the outside, Epplein took his German patriotism with him and affirmed his political views. On 15 March 1929 Epplein saw for the first time the coast of Africa. Looking at Cape Verde, Epplein marvelled at an island offshore, and reflected on the fate of Germany.

Interessant war auch eine vom Meerwasser zerfressene und zerklüftete Insel, die Dakar vorgelagert ist und deren einzelne Felsentrümmer mächtig aus dem Meer emporragen. Im Übrigen, wo es in der Welt etwas zu holen gibt, da sitzen entweder die Engländer oder die Franzosen. Und die dummen Deutschen zerfleischen sich selbst in ihrer Uneinigkeit und welche Gaben hätten sie, um aus jenen fremden Ländern wirklich etwas zu machen!<sup>48</sup>

Also interesting was an island corroded and jagged by the waters of the sea, which is off-shore from Dakar, and whose single debris of rocks tower mightily above the sea. By the way, wherever there is something to be got in the world, there sit either the British or the French. And the stupid Germans tear themselves apart in their disunity, and what gifts would they have to really make something out of these foreign countries!

That evening the ship's gramophone concert ended with a song which made Epplein define the relationship between his homeland and the world slightly differently. While the marginalisation of Germany internationally, and the loss of German colonies saddened Epplein, marginalisation and misuse of Christianity outraged him. The song played was a Dutch prayer written in 1597 to celebrate a Dutch victory. In spite of its founding circumstances it had found its way—via German and English translations—across national borders to become a religious song used in nationalistic contexts in

47 It is interesting to compare Epplein's strong responses to the British Empire with those of the philosopher Karl Löwith. Löwith, a pupil of Heidegger's, was of Jewish descent, and had left Germany already before the Third Reich. Despite extensive travels in Europe and living in Italy for six years, Löwith was unprepared for his first contact with the British Empire during his voyage to Japan: 'It was our first journey to the East and therefore, at the same time, the first opportunity to get an impression of the supremacy of the English nation. Thus far we had only ever travelled to the southern countries of Europe—to France, Italy and Dalmatia—and had little idea of the colonizing power and self-confidence of the Anglo-American world'. Karl Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933. A Report*, (transl. by Elizabeth King), University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1994, p. 117.

48 Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Epplein, Vol. IIa, p. 36.



various countries.<sup>49</sup> Eppelein commented that using this song as the final one in the concert was ‘symptomatic for our time’. Religion was only tolerated when it was placed within the context of nationalism. But Jesus Christ, Eppelein asserted, was greater than anyone’s fatherland. Christ’s gifts as well as his tasks were global, *weltumspannend*, spanning the world. Eppelein, whose thoughts travelled frequently back to Germany,<sup>50</sup> where he had left his young family as well as many urgent tasks relating to steering the Neuendettelsauer mission through the depression, was on his way to negotiate a new level of involvement in New Guinea for his society. But Neuendettelsau’s regaining responsibility for the New Guinea mission would add new expenses and burdens for the society.

Wie viele Deutsche meinen: Warum überhaupt noch christliche Mission, wenn es doch keine deutschen Kolonien mehr gibt? Abgesehen von den Segnungen, die aus der Mission gerade auf die deutsche Heimat zurückfluten, es bleibt die Tatsache der Übernationalität des Reiches Gottes bestehen: Christus ist doch größer als mein Vaterland! <sup>51</sup>

How many Germans think: Why actually still [have a] Christian mission at all, if there are no German colonies any more? Apart from the blessings which flood back to the German homeland from the mission, the fact of the supra-nationality of the kingdom of God remains: Christ is still greater than my fatherland!

Hearing the Dutch song Eppelein, it seems, envisaged himself back in Germany, bracing himself for the effort needed to win support for the agreement he was about to negotiate in Australia. On his return Eppelein would have to convince his fellow Bavarian Lutherans to increase their endeavours for the Neuendettelsauer New Guinea mission, despite the economic situation worsening in Germany, and despite the fact—so much was already clear to Eppelein long before his arrival in Brisbane—that for practical and political reasons the society would only be in charge of the mission it founded in collaboration with the American and Australian Lutherans. Thus Eppelein’s reference to the kingdom of God being ‘supranational’, and Christ being ‘greater than my fatherland’ was as much a reply to potential discontent at home as it was a soothing

49 The German Kaiser Wilhelm II had ordered the inclusion of the *Niederländisches Dankgebet* into German song books, while in the USA ‘We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing’ had become one of the central songs for Thanksgiving celebrations. In the Third Reich it was frequently played during political events, and is still included in song books of German World War II veterans, while in the Netherlands it became one of the favorite songs of the Dutch resistance. See for example <http://ingeb.org/valerius.html>.

50 See for example Eppelein’s diary entry of 26 March 1929, *Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein*, Vol. IIa, p. 44.

Die Uhren sind wieder andersgestellt worden, so daß im Augenblick unsere Schiffsuhr mit der in der lieben deutschen Heimat ziemlich zusammenstimmt.

The clocks have been adjusted, so that at the moment the ship’s clock is relatively in tune with those in the dear German home country.

51 *Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein*, Vol. IIa, p. 44.

of a rebellious discontented voice inside him, a voice which asserted German pride and German honour.

The journey continued without major incidents, apart from a stopover in South Africa, where he met his first *Heidenchristen*, converted pagans, and visited several churches, as well as the mission station Sarepta<sup>52</sup> of the Rheinische Mission. Eppelein's hosts were the Pastor of the German-Protestant congregation of St. Martini, Friedrich Hoberg, and his wife, who showed him and his travelling companion Adam Schuster<sup>53</sup> Cape Town and its surrounding area and introduced them to their views about Germans in South Africa, and South African politics in general. Hoberg's descriptions of the effects of WWI on the German Protestants in Cape Town found a sympathetic listener in Eppelein, and prepared his understanding of the situation of Lutherans of German descent in Australia. The church and his own house, Hoberg stated, had been threatened with destruction, but had been saved by guarding Afrikaaner students. Since the end of the war it had taken great efforts to maintain the German school, and Germans were disadvantaged economically. Eppelein's observation that at the local graveyard the German section was at the very margins could have been a summary of Eppelein's—and Hoberg's—opinion on British policies towards Germans in Cape Town. Here, in Cape Town, Eppelein met for the first time a German diaspora community and witnessed the tensions between cultural continuity and political and economic integration. His response was to lament the unfortunate state of the German-Protestant congregation of Cape Town, an associate member of the German Protestant Church Federation:

Leider ließ auch in Kapstadt die Einigkeit und das gesunde Volksbewußtsein sehr zu wünschen übrig.<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately in Cape Town, too, unity and a healthy Volks-consciousness left a lot to be desired.

In South Africa Eppelein was also introduced to another aspect of settler societies. Eppelein noted the number of mixed-bloods, the disproportionate ownership of goods and assets by the white minority, and complaints by coloured people who were regarded by Boers as 'children of Ham' and therefore inferior. This Eppelein regarded as

<sup>52</sup> Named after Lucas 4, verse 26, and 1 Kings 17.

<sup>53</sup> Adam Schuster was the other representative sent out from Neuendettelsau. Adam Schuster, employed by the Neuendettelsauer society since 1919 as *Heimatmissionar*, was connected by marriage to the Flierl family. Schuster's sister in law (Hanna Schmidt, sister of his wife Babette Schmidt) had married Johannes Flierl, one of the sons of senior Johan Flierl. See Fontius p. 239; Walther Ruf, *Die Familie Ruf in Neuendettelsau*, p. 35. Schuster wrote in the early 1960s a local history with the interesting title *Aus tausend Jahren Neuendettelsauer Geschichte* (Ansbach: Brügel, 1963).

<sup>54</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIa, p. 45.

hypocrisy, as the origin of mixed bloods had to be ‘sexual abuse’ of local Black people by these Whites. Eppelein closed his observations on the ‘enormously strong racial mixing’, and on economic and social injustice by wondering whether in 20 years time Africa would not have a very different face.

What did Eppelein mean by that rather cryptic comment? Understood in the light of other writings of his at that time, it seems that Eppelein’s prognosis was far from advocacy for a society in which black and white and coloured people live together with equal rights and equal opportunities. Rather he implied that sin created its own momentum, and the (white) sinners would harvest what they had sown. Instead of remaining separate groups or races within the one *Voelkerfamilie*,<sup>55</sup> segregating life but sharing in the value of being humans, children of God, white South Africans denied black people the value and dignity given to them by God the creator, while overstepping the boundary ‘race’, a boundary made and set by God. In fact, Eppelein argued for segregation, but one without sexual or economic exploitation.

In contrast to these overall conditions Eppelein praised the achievements of the Rheinische mission. The native Christians in the whole South African mission-church, Eppelein commented, had for quite some time supported their missionaries financially all by themselves. But the growth of an indigenous clergy still lagged behind, as the natives, Eppelein noted in his diary, preferred white missionaries.<sup>56</sup>

Using his travel notes after his return to Germany, Eppelein connected his ‘experiences’ abroad to criticise aspects of the political situation in Germany as well as to illustrate the soundness of the ideas and practice of the Lutheran Mission in New Guinea.<sup>57</sup> Did he, when he remarked in his diary that South Africa might be different in 20 years, also already think about ongoing social and political changes that Germany and New Guinea had been experiencing? And did he, when he outlined the role of a church, like that of the Protestant Cape-Germans, or a mission, like Sarepta station, in forming and supporting a community if necessary apart from and against the aims of government

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<sup>55</sup> *Voelkerfamilie* is a philosophical concept, meaning that mankind was one unity subdivided into peoples.

<sup>56</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIa, p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> Eppelein, ‘Streiflichter auf den Nationalsozialismus von meiner Australien-Neuguineareise Her’, *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, 12.2.1931 No. 7, pp. 50-53.

and the wider society, also think about the Lutheran Mission in New Guinea, and maybe the Neuendettelsauer society and the Lutheran church in Germany?

Reading Epplein's comments on Germans and on coloured people in South Africa it seems that Epplein applied firm ideas about what a people was and how it should live. Mixing of races seemed an unfortunate by-product of settlement and colonial rule. Ideally, as in Epplein's understanding of the aim of the German-Protestant church or the Rheinische mission, a people should look after its own affairs, its members should be united and proud of their heritage and responsible for running their own lives, whether they were Germans or black Africans. Such an understanding fell short of encompassing both the complexities of settler societies and of diaspora communities. Epplein's thinking was based on the idea that a people was a distinct entity, characterised by internal unity and cultural, economic and political self-sufficiency. Ironically, he was travelling to a meeting where the premise was transnational religious co-operation for the sake of a colonised people.

## The Brisbane Meeting May 1929

The mother gave birth to the little child foreign mission in N[ew] G[uinea], the big sisters in the New World have helped to nurture and look after the weak child from the beginning.

*Die Mutter hat dem Kindelein der Heidenmission auf N[eu] G[uinea] das Leben gegeben, die grossen Schwestern in der Neuen Welt haben vom ersten Anfang an das schwache Kindlein pflegen und versorgen helfen.*

(Johann Flierl, 3.4.1925)<sup>58</sup>

Eppelein and Schuster arrived in Australia delighted to find friends abroad, as they had in South Africa. Although not knowing any of those Lutherans personally who welcomed them in Adelaide, they had a shared past. Schuster observed that many were former students of the seminary in Neuendettelsau:

Wir kannten zwar keinen von ihnen von Angesicht, wenn sie uns auch sonst nicht unbekannt waren, es war aber bald der innere Kontakt hergestellt. ... So hat uns gleich von Anfang an Heimatluft umweht & uns geholfen, im fremden Land und heimisch zu fühlen.<sup>59</sup>

We knew none of them personally, even though they were otherwise not unknown to us, but soon inner contact was established. ... Consequently right from the outset an atmosphere redolent of home surrounded us, which helped us to feel at home in the foreign country.

Yet, while interested in Germany, and German church affairs,<sup>60</sup> the Lutheran brothers in Australia faced similar pressures to the German diaspora Lutherans in South Africa. As a result of the difficulties during the war, two of the church districts, Victoria and New South Wales, had switched to English as their official language, Queensland had decided on bi-lingualism, and only the South Australian district had kept German. The trend especially amongst the younger members of the church was a disintegration of German language and culture brought about by political, social, economic and cultural pressures. The first and most important reason was the introduction of a government regulation hindering German language teaching, Schuster was told, but other causes were also at play:

Als 2. Grund kann man wohl anführen, dass die ganze Erziehung der Kinder in den Schulen bewusst national-australisch ist. Darum wollen die jungen

The second reason is, that the whole education of children in schools is consciously nationalistic-Australian [in direction]. ... That's why the young

<sup>58</sup> 3.4.1925 Johann Flierl, Denkschrift ueber bestmoegliche und gedeihliche Fortfuehrung und Erhaltung unserer lutherischen Mission in Neu Guinea [unpublished manuscript, 11 pages], UELCA-NG: LMF 55/20 Manuscripts and papers, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> A. Schuster (NG) 1929 - Im fremden Land und doch daheim. Reiseeindruecke waehrend eines 6 woechigen Aufenthalts in Australien, ALC NG LMF 56/51.

<sup>60</sup> A. Schuster 1929 - Im fremden Land und doch daheim, noted:

Ueberall war dies eine der ersten Fragen, die an uns gerichtet wurde: Wie gehts im alten Vaterland?

Everywhere one of the first questions put to us was: How are things in the old fatherland?

Leute aus deutschen Haeusern nicht mehr als Deutsche sondern als Australier gelten.	people from German families want to be regarded not as Germans, but as Australians.
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A representative of the German Protestant church Federation, Carl Schneider, who came to Australia in mid-1928 to invite the UELCA to become a member, had similar experiences. He reported back to Germany that while the older generation had been educated in Germany and spoke German fluently, they only wanted connections with the *Gotteskasten*, the Martin-Luther Federation, and not with the German Protestant church, which also included non-Lutheran members. The younger generation of the UELCA, Schneider wrote, were even less interested in Germany, as one of Julius Stolz' sons had told him:

Die jungen [Pastoren] betrachteten den Krieg als die Geburtsstunde einer english-australischen Kirche und arbeiten darauf hin. Er [Stolz] sagte wörtlich: 'The war has helped our church.' <sup>61</sup>	The younger [clergy] see the war as the hour giving birth to an English-Australian church and worked towards this. He [Stolz] told me: 'The war has helped our church.'
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Eppelein and Schuster's interpretation of the situation was less positive than that of Stolz. From a position of superiority in the face of what they understood as cultural loss of Lutheran diaspora communities, which had the potential to endanger religious continuity, Schuster somewhat condescendingly declared:

Und man kann das auch in gewissem Sinn verstehen. Australien ist ihr Vaterland, wie Deutschland das unsrige.	And one can to some degree understand that. Australia is their fatherland in the same way Germany is ours.
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Schuster concluded:

... will der Deutsche in fremden Land sein Leben fristen, so ist er in grosser Gefahr, dabei in fremdem Volkstum auf & unterzugehen. <sup>62</sup>	... if a German wants to lead his life in a foreign country, he is in great danger of being absorbed and submerged in foreign <i>Volkstum</i> .
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Eppelein and Schuster came to the meeting as proud German Lutherans, members of the society, which had founded the mission in New Guinea, and had over a long time assisted both the American Lutherans and Australian Lutherans to become who they were. The humbling experiences, however, they had made during their journey as losers of the war in the lands of the victors was to continue. All the power lay with the Americans and Australians. The German delegates had to negotiate from the position of supplicants.

<sup>61</sup> 7.7.1928 Carl Schneider to D. Rendtorff, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin, 5/2871.

<sup>62</sup> A. Schuster (NG) 1929 - Im fremden Land und doch daheim. Reiseeindrücke während eines 6 wöchigen Aufenthalts in Australien, ALC NG LMF 56/51.

In May 1929 representatives of the Rheinisch Mission in Barmen, the American Iowa Synod, Neuendettelsau and the UELCA met in Brisbane to sort out the future of the Lutheran Mission in New Guinea. The group photo taken at the Brisbane negotiations<sup>63</sup> shows Eppelein rather nervously clenching his jacket with his left hand. He is placed in the first row as is befitting for a mission director, but on a chair at the very right. Behind him, in a second row stands Adam Schuster, and missionary Georg Pilhofer, senior Flierl's son in law, who represented Neuendettelsau's field personnel. The even more marginal position on the left side is given to the representatives of the Rhenish mission, director R Schmidt in the first row, and superintendent A Hoffmann and missionary A Wullenkord in the second row behind him. Despite a long tradition of mission work in New Guinea, they are outsiders, coming from a 'united' mission society, which combined Lutheran and Calvinist traditions.

The Germans are flanking a triangle of power around the Australian pastor Otto Theile. With eight members the Australian Lutherans hosting the negotiations were clearly the majority. Behind Theile stands Johann Julius Stolz, president of the UELCA. To Theile's left Anton Hiller is seated, chairman of the UELCA's Board for Foreign Missions (BFM). Three other Australian Lutheran clergy, Gutekunst, Zwar and Doehler, form a third row at the very back, while one of the two lay members of the UELCA's mission board, G. Krueger, stands in the second row at the very right.<sup>64</sup> A slight tense distance between Theile and Hiller indicates that the display of unity and power by the Australian Lutherans, who pose quite rigidly and formally—four of the ordained clergy are wearing their clerical clothes—downplay serious internal tensions, caused by personal rivalry as much as by religious tradition. At the time of the Brisbane negotiations the UELCA's seminary had been in operation for only eight years, and most of the church's clergy had been trained overseas, mainly at the seminary in Neuendettelsau, and the 'united' seminary at Basel. Hiller was Basel trained, while Theile, Stolz, and Doehler had received theological training in Neuendettelsau.<sup>65</sup> The group was representative of the UELCA's clergy in general. While initially in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century most Lutheran lay people and clergy had come from Prussia, the influence

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63 See *Picture: Jericho, Seedtime and Harvest*, p. 48.

64 The group photo shows all but one of the representatives present at the 'Vertreter' conference in Brisbane. The only one not in the photo is W. Fritsch; it is likely that he took the photograph.

65 L Doehler (1902-12), JJ Stolz (1895-99, followed by further studies 1899-1900 at the University of Erlangen), FO Theile (1897-1901). See Herbart, *The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia*, 1938.

of Neuendettelsau on the UELCA during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century up until WWI was considerable. Of all pastors still in active service in 1938, who had received their training before the end of the war, about 40% had been to the seminary in Neuendettelsau.<sup>66</sup> At the time of the Brisbane negotiations a large proportion of the senior clergy were ex-Neuendettelsau seminarians. Some of them, like Ludwig Doehler, whose sister was married to the Neuendettelsau missionary Stephan Lehner, had close family connections to members of the Neuendettelsauer society. Was it a need for creating some distance during negotiations where representing one's church had to take precedent over personal ties, that made the pastors of the UELCA put on their clericals for the group photo? Perhaps it was also an assertion that the Australian Lutherans were, despite growing distance to the language of the Reformation, true to the creeds of their forefathers, and by no means a minor type of Lutheran?

In contrast to the formality expressed by his Australian colleagues Pastor Richard Taeuber, chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Iowa Synod, and sole representative of the American Lutherans, who occupies the place of honour on Theile's right, shows calm confidence in his position and his cultural identity. He sits in the first row, his body relaxed, wearing a suit typical for American intellectuals of the 1920s and 30s, a bow tie, and light coloured socks. His church, the Iowa Synod, celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1929, and was on the brink of merging with two other Lutheran synods in America to form a bigger American Lutheran church, with even

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66 Of all pastors of the UELCA and its predecessor churches from the 1830s to 1938 just under one fifth (18%) had been to the seminary in Neuendettelsau. Initially the majority of clergy came from Prussia. After WWI Australians briefly went to the USA to study theology, until the UELCA's own theological seminary had been established in 1921. And while in the two decades before WWI the majority of pastors recruited from abroad came from the united mission in Basel, Neuendettelsau, as a Lutheran institution, was the preferred place for Australian Lutherans to send their sons. In the years just before WWI six of the Australian-born clergy in active service in 1938 had been trained at Neuendettelsau, two at Hermannsburg, and three at Basel. German Universities were seen by many members of the UELCA as well as many German Lutherans connected to Neuendettelsau, as dangerous places infected by liberal theology. At the time of the Brisbane negotiations in 1921 only three Australian-born members of the UELCA had ever studied theology at a German university: JJ Stolz, JHS Heidenreich and AF Rechner. The statistical data has been compiled using details given by Herbart, *The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia*, 1938, pp. 303-330. Carl Schneider in 1928 commented that there were three main factions within the UELCA. One group consisted of those trained in Basel, who were, according to Schneider, hostile to the UELCA's president Stolz, and formed the 'real German element', expressing a wish for stronger connections with the German Protestant *Kirchenbund*. The 'Neuendettelsauer group' within the UELCA only wanted links with Neuendettelsau and the Iowa Synod, while the 'Australian-American group' educated in Australia and/or America were anti-German. See 10.8.1928 Carl Schneider to 'Herr Geheimrat', Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin 5/2871.



greater financial resources and manpower.<sup>67</sup> Whatever was needed to support the Lutheran mission in New Guinea, his church could provide it in return for a fair share in the control of the mission. Both the Iowa Synod and the UELCA were indebted to the Neuendettelsauer society for support. Yet while the Australian Lutherans opened their own training seminary only after WWI, the Americans had long taken their fate into their own hands, and had in return offered support and sanctuary to some of the Neuendettelsauer missionaries who had had to leave New Guinea after WWI.<sup>68</sup>

The intense negotiations in Brisbane, which lasted for ten days<sup>69</sup> and took place at the congregation-school of pastor P. Krause, dealt with two separate, but related issues: the future involvement of the Rheinisch Mission in the Madang area, and the future involvement of the Neuendettelsauer Mission in the Finschhafen region. Both problems were dealt with in several alternating sessions, some of which were attended by all, but for most either the representatives of Neuendettelsau or of Barmen left the room. While Barmen insisted on taking over its old mission field, Neuendettelsau opted for the co-operation of all three Lutheran partner-organisations.<sup>70</sup> As Stolz would remind the mission director of the Neuendettelsauer society three years later, Eppelein repeated over and over again his motto, which had already accompanied him during his voyage: 'Christ is bigger than our fatherland'.<sup>71</sup> Eppelein's reference put organisational, doctrinal, and national divisions aside, and referred to the resurrected, universal, and embodied Christ, and by implication to the personal relationship all Christians had with him. Doing so Eppelein implicitly acknowledged profound tensions between the parties present. The Lutherans Eppelein wanted united in collaboration came from three different nations, all with different aims and profoundly different recent experiences. In introducing Christ transcending national boundaries, Eppelein used a traditional Pietistic formulation as a kind of last resort to remind all present that they ultimately stood on shared ground. It was a plea for good will, as Neuendettelsau had no means of forcing its inclusion into control and leadership.

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<sup>67</sup> The American Lutheran Church was formed in 1930, merging the Joint Synod of Ohio (1818), Buffalo Synod (1845), Texas (1851) and Iowa Synods (1854).

<sup>68</sup> For example Wilhelm Flierl born in New Guinea, training in Neuendettelsau, worked in NG just before WWI; after internment in Australia (1915-1920) he worked as parish pastor in USA (1922-1927), before being allowed to return to New Guinea.

<sup>69</sup> 6 to 15 May 1929.

<sup>70</sup> Eppelein stated right from the beginning and throughout the negotiations that Neuendettelsau wanted to become a partner with equal rights and responsibilities, so that they could call the New Guinea Mission "our Mission". See protocol p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> 29.1.1932 J.J.Stolz to Gesellschaft, ND 54/21-3 correspondence ND-UELCA.

With Barmen insisting on sole control it became clear that the Lutheran Mission, officially uniting the Madang and Finschhafen areas under one name and structure since 1921, would have to be disentangled and separated. After Barmen promised to continue mission work on a solely Lutheran basis<sup>72</sup> to ensure the unity of a future Papuan<sup>73</sup> church, and offered to give some areas to American Lutherans for mission work, it was agreed that on 1 January 1930 the control of the Madang field would be taken over by its original mother society.<sup>74</sup> But control could only extend over the actual work, and did not include property rights, as the government still insisted German property be held by Australian trustees. Even for the American Iowa Synod, Taeuber declared, the problem had been similar; they had understood themselves to be co-owner not according to government regulations, but to a “gentlemen’s agreement”<sup>75</sup>. Barmen needed somebody willing to act as property trustees for them, without interfering in control and decision-making.<sup>76</sup> For the UELCA the fact that Barmen was not Lutheran, but United was a serious difficulty, and the Australian church was also not prepared to take legal responsibilities without having any say. An additional problem was, Theile explained, that the trustees did not have the power to appoint a successor—this was the government’s prerogative. He suggested that the best tactic would be to try to convince the government to allow a transfer of trusteeship from the UELCA in Australia to a board of trustees in the field. It was thought best that Barmen should not approach the government or use official channels, like the representation of the German consul, but that Theile would continue to negotiate with government officials on Barmen’s behalf.

Eppelein’s proposal for shared control for the Finschhafen area created even more difficulties. Neuendettelsau insisted on becoming an equal partner immediately in order to be able to call the New Guinea Mission “our Mission” again—something donors in Bavaria favoured very strongly. The Iowa Synod was only prepared for a dual

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72 Barmen was not Lutheran, but united, meaning Lutheran and Calvinist united. This posed great doctrinal difficulties for all Lutheran Americans, Australians and Neuendettelsau. Further, the aim of mission work, which was stressed especially strongly by Pilhofer, was to enable the development of a united Lutheran Papuan church, a *papuanische lutherische Volkskirche*.

73 The term used was *papuanische Kirche* and *papuanische Volkskirche*; the distinction was made not according to political borders between New Guinea and Papua, but between Melanesian and Papuan people, along linguistic, ethnic and perceived racial lines.

74 It was negotiated that financial responsibilities would change immediately, with some debts being taken over by Barmen, some store goods being paid for by Barmen, and some harvest to be given to the Americans; missionaries would be replaced gradually in order not to jeopardise the work too much.

75 See protocol p. 11.

76 Schmidt put it to the representatives of the UELCA that if they were not willing to be trustees any more, Barmen would find somebody else in Australia.

leadership. The Americans wanted to keep administrative structures as simple as possible, especially as they were on the brink of merging with two other American Lutheran Synods, the Buffalo and Ohio Synod. The Australian Lutherans, already suffering financial shortages as a consequence of the beginning of the depression, offered to opt out, dissolve their Board for Foreign Missions and leave control of the Finschhafen Mission to the German and American Lutherans. This solution Neuendettelsau was unwilling to accept. The political and financial future, Eppelein declared, was so unclear, that a partner close by was necessary.

In the end Taeuber gave in and accepted the collaboration of the Iowa Synod, UELCA and Neuendettelsau as a temporary compromise. But a process, he said, would have to be started to gradually develop spheres of interest in the field. This would enable the field to stay one entity, but at the same time allow each involved Mission Board to work more independently. Further, Taeuber pointed out, collaboration with Neuendettelsau would only be possible if Neuendettelsau stayed clearly Lutheran<sup>77</sup> and independent of the Bavarian Lutheran Church.<sup>78</sup>

Eppelein in turn wanted some sentences in a pamphlet by Schneider cleared. Schneider had visited the UELCA in 1928, in order to negotiate closer ties between the German *Kirchenbund* and the UELCA, and had quoted members of the UELCA as saying that Neuendettelsau should not get its field back. Stolz and Hiller reassured Eppelein that this was not the official opinion of the church, but only of single individuals.<sup>79</sup>

After the fundamental question of the numbers of partners controlling the New Guinea Mission was solved, and some other minor matters of dissatisfaction and major ones of

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<sup>77</sup> Doubt was especially directed towards Karl Steck, who had left Neuendettelsau in 1928, and taken up the newly created position of Mission representative of the Bavarian Lutheran Church. For debates about the internal crisis of Neuendettelsau during the 1920s, which centred around Steck, and the critique by Australian Lutherans that Steck's understanding of the Eucharist was 'unistic'; see Fontius, p. 200.

<sup>78</sup> The latter had joined the *Kirchenbund* (DEKB), the German Evangelical Church Federation, a loose union of Lutheran, Calvinist and United German churches founded in 1922. See for example Latourette Kenneth Scott, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol II: Advance through Storm. A.D. 1914 and after, with concluding generalisation*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London 1947, p. 95. Eppelein pointed out the ongoing support Neuendettelsau received from the Bavarian Lutheran Church, and rejected any interference in home matters, as Neuendettelsau had not and would not interfere with internal matters of the Iowa Synod either.

<sup>79</sup> Schneider's correspondence seems to indicate that one of these 'single individuals' arguing against any involvement of Neuendettelsau in New Guinea was actually Theile. Schneider called Theile 'as devious as Stolz himself'. 20.9.1928 Carl Schneider to D. Rendtorff, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin 5/2871.

doctrinal concern were cleared up<sup>80</sup>, the debate turned towards the practicalities of organising the collaboration. It was agreed that Neuendettelsau, Iowa and the UELCA would deal with home matters independently, which included training, examining and ordaining mission candidates, running mission seminars and retirement and holiday homes, and organising publicity, publications and donations. All field matters, including the sending of candidates, would be decided together as a 'main board'. An Australian-based director would be responsible to all three mission boards, and would deal with all finances for both the main board and the field. He would further deal with the Australian government and matters in the field which needed immediate attention. A Field Superintendent<sup>81</sup> would be directly responsible to the director, and would be in charge of all mission staff in the three mission spheres. The field would need more independence for this structure to work, and while the director would be responsible to the three boards, he would also have to have enough independence to deal with emergencies.

The structure thus created was a compromise with overlapping tasks and responsibilities, no clear idea of how the "main board" would function, how a consensus would be reached, or what to do in a situation where disagreements could not be bridged. It rested very much on trust and goodwill among the three Lutheran partners, as well as on the ability of the Australian based Director to be decisive, tactful, all inclusive, and able to juggle the differing interests of not only the boards, but also the field and field-interest spheres. The situation remained unresolved in regard to the legal situation of the new entity, as it was decided that it was not wise to upset the Australian government by informing it of the changes, or necessary at this very moment to seek amendments to the property situation, as the field senior was allowed to sell and buy. Neuendettelsau was assured that its property rights would be respected, and Eppelein promised in turn to grant property rights to the two partners in return for their mission work. The creation of the spheres of interest received no detailed attention either, but was to be a gradual process, negotiated over time.

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<sup>80</sup> UELCA's doctrinal purity was also questioned, as they accepted pastoral candidates not only from the Lutheran Seminars Neuendettelsau and Hermannsburg, but also from the unistic Basel Seminar. It was further mentioned that Neuendettelsau, especially the former mission director, Rudolf Ruf, had been emphasising 'national' aspects too much, and had not put enough weight on the ecumenical importance of Lutheran collaboration world wide.

<sup>81</sup> The title chosen was first *Senior*, taking up the title of Senior Flierl, who was about to retire, but was then changed to the German *Feldinspektor*, English *Superintendent*.

After finalising the negotiations the agreement was signed by all involved parties on 20 May, Pentecost Monday.<sup>82</sup> This added a symbolic significance to the agreement, as Pentecost is not only celebrated as the foundation of the Christian church, but was and is also traditionally understood as the beginning of the foreign mission.<sup>83</sup>

The co-operation of these Lutherans across three continents was part of a wider trend of church federations and unions within Protestantism at the time. Parallel to other social and moral reform movements such as the temperance, anti-slavery and peace movements, the ecumenical movement started as a trend in the first decade of the twentieth century, with mission and student organisations at the forefront<sup>84</sup>, but gained added momentum after WWI. It was fuelled by the shock of war, an urgent sense of common tasks in a shared but fragile and dangerously disunited world, and the opportunities and obligations opened up by ever improving tools of communication and travel. A sense of shared threat from revolutions and revolutionary movements increased the necessity and desire for co-operation and unity. Communism was seen as the greatest danger, mainly in Europe, but anti-colonial movements, especially in India and other parts of Asia, with what was understood at the time by many mission circles as a rise in 'nationalism' and 'race consciousness'<sup>85</sup>, also seemed to work against Christianity and its expansion.<sup>86</sup>

Lutheran churches were part of this broader movement, but mostly kept their distance from ecumenical endeavours to cross denominational divides; they tended to opt for federations with fellow Lutherans on a regional, national and international level. In 1923 the Lutheran World Convention was founded. In America the American Lutheran Church (ALC) was formed in 1931, to give only one example of many Lutheran church federations. In Australia the UELCA emerged in 1921. The German Evangelical

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82 The next day was spent sending out copies of the agreement and the protocol. Epplein noted in his diary that the Neuendettelsauer representatives had to get 60 envelopes ready for everybody connected to their mission society alone. (Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Epplein, LKN, Manuscripts, Ms 1302/24-b, Vol. IIa, p 94).

83 For the biblical narrative see Acts chapter 2.

84 Especially the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910, which led to the formation of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1921, and in the end to the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC) after WWII. See Willem A. Visser't Hooft, 'The Genesis of the World Council of Churches', Rouse, Ruth and Stephen Charles Neill (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical movement 1517 - 1948*, published on behalf of the Ecumenical Institute Chateau de Bossey by S.P.C.K. London 1954, pp. 697-724.

85 See for example Latourette, *Advance through Storm*; see also the periodical of the IMC *International Review of Missions*.

86 See for example Latourette, *Advance through Storm* pp. 27-34, and Ustorf, pp. 83-127.

Church Federation (*Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchenbund*), formed in 1921/22, was an exception, combining Lutheran and non-Lutheran Protestant churches, and was seen by many Lutheran organisations in Germany and abroad as deeply problematic. When the UELCA was approached and invited to affiliate with the German Evangelical Church Federation, the Australian Lutherans, who were keen to keep links with Germany for religious-cultural purposes, nevertheless declined, and decided to join the German based Martin-Luther-Federation instead.<sup>87</sup>

The young Lutheran transnational mission partnership of Germans, Americans and Australians thus seemed to offer much more than a better pooling of resources and a working collaboration born out of political necessities. It promised a re-affirmation of Lutheranism across national divides, which would not only benefit the mission work, but also spiritually enrich the Lutheran communities at home. Unfortunately, such high hopes were immediately dampened during the negotiations by American demands for separate spheres of influence. While the Germans kept quiet on this point for tactical reasons, they shared the sentiments of their American colleagues. On the day the Brisbane agreement was signed Eppelein noted in his diary that it could only have ‘significance momentarily ... as a stage within a wider process’. He lamented that it was very difficult for foreigners to understand the German psyche, and vice-versa. The wounds the last war—already over a decade past—had inflicted were still wide open, and the rifts it had caused had not yet healed. Eppelein commented that in his opinion there was a tendency prevalent ‘these days’ to see the treaty of Versailles as a model for solutions of church and mission affairs:

Ich hatte alles zu tun, um den Versailler-Vertrag  
(diese furchtbare politische Fehlentscheidung  
unserer damaligen Gegner) bei unseren  
Missionsabmachungen auszuschalten.<sup>88</sup>

I was busy eliminating the treaty of Versailles  
(this terribly wrong political decision by our  
former enemies) from our mission agreements.

During the following two years the Brisbane agreement was slowly brought into question by Neuendettelsau, which, more and more argued for increased independence for the involved organisations, while the UELCA found itself between two powerful partners, who were keener on sharing responsibilities than rights. During the fifth

<sup>87</sup> In 1928 the Lutheran church in Sydney, and in 1933 the Lutheran church in Melbourne joined the DEKB directly. See for example Bundesarchiv Potsdam, Auswaertiges Amt (AA) Kulturabteilung, 69337 and 69338.

<sup>88</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIa, p. 94. Eppelein appears to be inserting excerpts from his diary into his autobiography. The autobiography and appendices seem to constitute a collection of selected letters, diary entries and other documents of the time, though it is impossible to be certain that the above quoted remarks are really from his diary and not inserted in 1961. I have not seen the original diary.

General Synod of the UELCA, which took place in Tanunda, South Australia, during August 1931, the Australian Lutherans decided to cease their formal role within the leadership triumvirate of the Lutheran Missions New Guinea, and to dissolve their Board for Foreign Missions, replacing it with a smaller board, sufficient to deal with the remaining tasks. By then the Madang area had been taken over by Barmen, and the remaining regions of the Lutheran Missions New Guinea had been split into two spheres of interest: Neuendettelsau was to look after the main part of the Finschhafen area, while the American Lutherans were responsible for the 'Finisterre' region, comprising the Rai coast and parts of the Finschhafen terrain. The UELCA, with no sphere of interest allocated in New Guinea<sup>89</sup> and diminishing financial resources, no longer wanted to commit itself to a specific sum for the support of the New Guinea field. The UELCA was also under no illusion that the separation into spheres of interest would eventually lead to a separation into two independent missions. Thus it was resolved to leave management and control to the American and German Lutherans, but to continue the partnership by supporting the New Guinea Missions financially and with personnel inasmuch as the UELCA could do so.<sup>90</sup>

As the Australian government had so far refused to allow any formal control of German societies over missions in the Mandated Territory, the legal control of the mission and its property was still in the hands of boards of trustees formed by the UELCA's board of foreign missions. The Australian government, always the last to be involved in negotiations, had the political power to bring the UELCA's plans to a halt. But internal church politics overrode considerations of potential damage or disadvantage to the Lutheran mission in New Guinea caused by this disregard for the political wishes of the Australian government. Had not Theile managed to work out far more difficult changes in the immediate post war years with a government hostile to Germans and Lutherans? In making the decision to withdraw from formal control the UELCA showed great confidence in Theile's ability to negotiate a solution or find a loop hole.

Neuendettelsau's response to the changes, while somewhat anticipated, still came as a surprise to the UELCA. In December 1931 a cable arrived, announcing that Neuendettelsau wanted the field divided, and insisted on the sole control and

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<sup>89</sup> The UELCA's interest sphere was Hope Valley in North Queensland, as part of the pre WWI German Mission field.

<sup>90</sup> A Hiller, report to 5<sup>th</sup> General Synod, Synod Reports UELCA 1921-1937, pp. 101-110.

management of the Finschhafen mission.<sup>91</sup> Epplein, responding to disappointed letters from Australia, explained in a long letter to Stolz that things had changed in Germany, and that German Lutherans did not support the Lutheran ecumenical movement anymore. Neuendettelsau, having to “take into account the realities in our nation and in our church” had to make sure that the New Guinea mission was not seen as an Australian-American enterprise. Epplein downplayed the actual consequences of the Neuendettelsauer demands. He assured Stolz that the aim was not for the field to become “a separate nation, but a state within a federation”.<sup>92</sup> The Neuendettelsauer mission society, which two years earlier had supported shared control, even convincing the representatives of the Iowa synod to accept the Australians into the leadership triumvirate, had left the path of ecumenical co-operation, and, influenced by developments within Germany, opted for independence and separateness. What had happened between 1929 and 1931 that made Neuendettelsau shift its direction so radically?

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<sup>91</sup> See 13.1.1932 Theile to ND, ALC and UELCA, ND 53/31.

<sup>92</sup> 26.2.1932 Epplein to Stolz, ND 54/21-1.

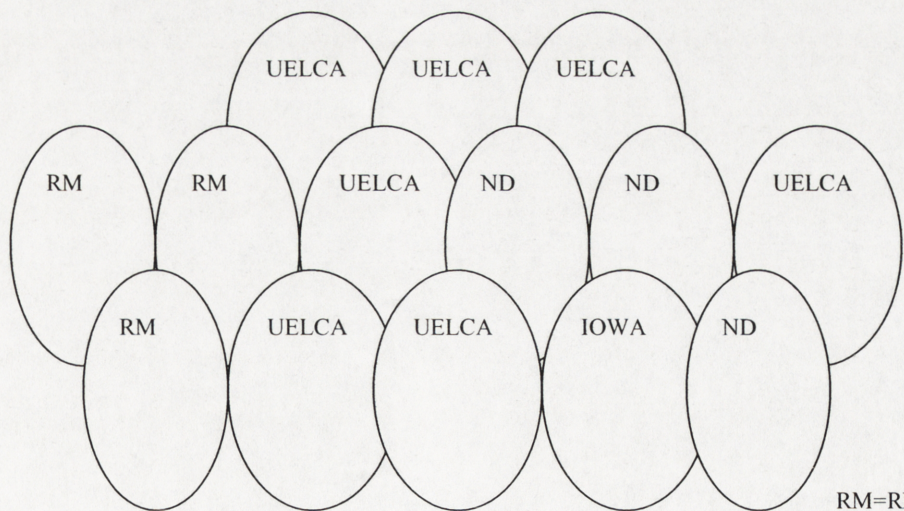


Plate 1:



Group Photo, The Brisbane Negotiations (*Vertreterkonferenz*) 1929.  
Source: Jericho, E. A., *Seedtime and Harvest in New Guinea*, Adelaide, 1961, p. 48.

From Left to right: Back row: E. Gutekunst, J. Zwar, L. Doehler  
Second Row: Schmidt, Wullenkord, J.J. Stolz, G. Pilhofer, A. Schuster, G. Krueger  
Front Row: G. Hoffman, A. Hiller, F. O. Theile, R. Taeuber, Dr. F. Eppelein.



RM=Rheinische Mission  
ND=Neuendettelsauer Mission  
IOWA=Iowa Synode  
UELCA=United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia



**Table 2:**  
**Lutheran Missions in New Guinea—amalgamations and separations, 1914-1945.**

Time	Finschhafen	Madang
1880s-1914	Neuendettelsauer Mission (1886)	Rheinische Mission (1887)
1914-21	Looked after by Australian Lutherans and Iowa Synod	Looked after by Australian Lutherans and Iowa Synod
1922-29	Lutheran Missions New Guinea, united under the control of UELCA and Iowa Synod.	
1930-32	Controlled by UELCA, Iowa Synod (ALC) and Neuendettelsauer Mission. Creation of two spheres of interest.	Controlled temporarily by Rheinische Mission.
1933-41	Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, controlled by Neuendettelsauer Mission, with assistance from VELKA	Lutheran Mission Madang, controlled by ALC, with assistance from VELKA
1945	Amalgamated under control of ALC (with assistance and staff from VELKA and Neuendettelsau)	

## **II**

### **The Last Years of the Weimar Republic and Neuendettelsau's Political Repositioning**

## The Lossin Case

Did our saviour have anything to do with politics, with party politics?  
*Hat unser Heiland mit Politik, mit Parteipolitik irgend etwas zu tun gehabt?*  
 (Eppelein to Lossin 29.12.1928)

In mid-1927, two years after the ban on the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) as a political party had been lifted, two lawyers<sup>1</sup> approached the Neuendettelsauer Mission on behalf of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, the main organisation of Jewish Germans in the country. They explained to the mission director, Rudolf Ruf, and the home mission superintendent, Friedrich Eppelein, that the *Centralverein* had received several letters from one of the mission's employees, Franz Lossin, which could only be understood as blackmail.<sup>2</sup>

Franz Lossin, who was originally ordained to become a Lutheran pastor in Brazil but turned out not to be suited for tropical conditions on health grounds, was employed by the Neuendettelsauer Mission in 1920, aged 29, and posted to the Franconian town Bayreuth as a *Heimatmissionar*.<sup>3</sup> A *Heimatmissionar*, literally translated as home missionary, had the double task to evangelise at home and to raise awareness and support for the Neuendettelsauer Mission, especially its foreign mission enterprises.

In letters to the *Centralverein* Lossin claimed that during the course of his work he had collected 'hundreds of confessions of German girls and women' which bear witness to the 'sadism of a great number of Jewish men'.<sup>4</sup> He had, he wrote, prepared a manuscript, and would now like to seek the advice of the *Centralverein* whether he should follow the wishes of nationalistic circles and publish the manuscript as a book—a publisher in Munich had already offered him 100,000 Reichsmark.

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<sup>1</sup> The lawyers were Dr Gallinger and Dr Staudinger from Nuremberg. Gerhard Jochem from the archive in Nuremberg, kindly informed me that series C21/III Einwohnermeldekartei Nr 1979 contained a card with information about Justizrat Dr Josef Gallinger. He was born on 9 July 1872 in Nuremberg, and, because he was Jewish, left Germany for Haifa on 20 August 1938. There was nothing further known in the archive about his fate. Gerhard Jochem was unable to locate information about Dr Staudinger, but thought it most unlikely that he was Jewish. The name indicated Bavarian Christian heritage. 17 April 2002, Email from Dr Gerhard Jochem, Stadtarchiv Nürnberg to Christine Winter.

<sup>2</sup> See Personalakte Lossin, ND 30/42. Karl Steck was also present during some of the negotiations, see 28.10.1930 Steck to Klein, LKAN-ZMV 157.

<sup>3</sup> See ND 30/42.

<sup>4</sup> 21.5.1927 Lossin to Centralverein dt. Staatsbuerger juedischen Glaubens, ND 30/42. 'Und gerade im Dienste der Volksmission habe ich hunderte von Bekenntnissen deutscher Maedchen und Frauen entgegen nehmen muessen, die den Sadismus einer grossen Zahl juedischer Maenner kennzeichnen'.

Lossin was ordered to appear at a meeting in Neuendettelsau, and show Eppelein the manuscript and all related correspondence.<sup>5</sup> His initial response was to hand in his resignation, which he later withdrew.<sup>6</sup> His protests that the matter was private and not anything the employer should be concerned with were overruled:

...so lange Du unser Berufsarbeiter bist, müssen wir doch von Dir verlangen dürfen, daß Du uns genauen Aufschluß bietest über Dinge, um derentwillen nun nicht nur Deine Privatperson, sondern unsere ganze Heimatmission zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden soll.<sup>7</sup>

...as long as you are our employee, we have to be allowed to insist, that you fully inform us about matters, for which not only you as a private person, but our whole home mission is being made accountable.

Lossin came to Neuendettelsau, and in addition to the matter raised by the *Centralverein's* lawyers, the issue of Lossin's public support for the NSDAP was discussed, something which had been of great concern to the local home mission group in Bayreuth. Lossin promised to sever his ties with the NSDAP<sup>8</sup>. He was then sent on three weeks leave before resuming his duties in Bayreuth. Yet the local home mission group was still distrustful of him. Three months after his return they asked that he be transferred to another city. Eppelein, who had worked with Lossin during his time as a parish priest in Bayreuth, intervened on Lossin's behalf, explaining that a transfer was not possible—either Lossin was sacked or he stayed. The local group reconsidered, and Lossin stayed.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of 1928 Neuendettelsau gave a second warning to Lossin. Contrary to his promises to stay away from the NSDAP, Lossin had acted as second speaker at a national socialist Christmas celebration, the main speaker being the NSDAP member for the Bavarian Parliament, Hans Schemm.<sup>10</sup> The local newspaper reported under the heading "German Christmas":

5 25.7.1927 und 1.8.1927 Eppelein an Lossin, ND 30/42. Eppelein at that time was responsible for all home mission activities of Neuendettelsau, but also would have had previous dealings with Lossin during his time as Pastor in Bayreuth.

6 25.8.1927 Lossin to Mission Inspector Eppelein and Pastor Konrad Wirth, ND 30/42. See also 28.10.1930 Steck an Klein, 31.10.1930 Klein an Steck, LKAN - ZMV 157. The resignation was sent back to Lossin on 8.10.1927.

7 1.8.1927 Eppelein to Pastor Lossin, ND 30/42.

8 See 29.12.1928 Eppelein to Lossin, ND 30/42.

9 17.1.1928 Prof. Weber to Eppelein; 31.1.1928 Eppelein to Prof. Weber, ND 30/42. Eppelein explained to Weber that because of financial restrictions a new home missionary could be employed for Bayreuth only if Lossin was laid off. Could Weber really take the responsibilities for this 'before God and man' ('vor Gott und den Menschen'), Eppelein asked.

10 Hans Schemm was born on 6.10.1891 in Bayreuth, where he taught at the local school as *Hauptlehrer* from 1922 to 1928. The same year he started teaching he became member of the Bavarian state Parliament, and regional leader of the NSDAP (*Gauleiter für Oberfranken*, in 1933 renamed *Gau*

Als weiterer Redner sprach dann, mit tosendem Beifall empfangen, Pastor Losin (sic), ein vertriebener Missionar aus Neuguinea.<sup>11</sup>

A further speaker, welcomed with roaring applause, was Pastor Losin (sic), a missionary expelled from New Guinea.

Such a public display could not be ignored. Eppelein wrote to Lossin, criticising the specific content of the NSDAP Christmas celebration in Bayreuth, detailing Neuendettelsau's dissatisfaction, and insisting on party political neutrality.

Wir Reichgottesarbeiter sind keine Privatleute, sondern haben ein Amt. Darum müssen wir uns in allem, was wir tun & was wir lassen fragen, ob nicht unserem Amt Schaden erwachsen kann. Und zu den Dingen, die das Amt eines Neuendettelsauer Berufsarbeiters einfach nicht tragen kann, gehört dies, dass wir irgendwie mit der Parteipolitik verquicken, bzw. den Anschein erwecken, als ob wir unser Evangelium mit dem Programm irgendeiner politischen Partei identifizieren könnten. Ich gebe zu, daß man tosende Begeisterung hinnehmen kann, wenn man in solch eine Versammlung geht & damit der betreffenden 'Partei & ihrer Politik' dient - aber es geht auf Kosten des Vertrauens, das man auch einmal in den Kreisen hatte & auch künftig noch haben müsste, die nicht zu dieser Partei gehören. Hat unser Heiland mit Politik, mit Parteipolitik irgend etwas zu tun gehabt? Wäre unser Heiland einverstanden gewesen mit der Rede des Herrn Landtagsabgeordneten Schemm? Und wäre unser Heiland damit einverstanden gewesen, daß einer seiner Diener durch die Teilnahme an der nationalsozialistischen Weihnachtsfeier die dort vertretene Auffassung von Weihnachten zu bestätigen scheint? Bitte beantworte Dir diese Frage vor Gott und Deinem Gewissen.<sup>12</sup>

We as workers in the kingdom of God are not private people, but we have an office. That's why we always have to ask ourselves regarding everything we do & leave, whether damage might be done to our office.

And amongst the things the office of a Neuendettelsauer employee cannot bear is that we mingle in any way with party politics, or that we give the appearance of identifying our gospel with the program of any political party.

I admit that one can accept roaring applause, when one goes into such a meeting & by doing so serves the respective 'Party & its politics' - but it is done to the detriment of the trust one has had & needs to have in the future amongst such circles, which do not belong to this party.

Did our Saviour have anything to do with politics, with party politics?

Would our Saviour have agreed with the talk of Parliamentary Schemm? And would our Saviour have agreed that one of his servants by participating in the national socialist Christmas celebration seemed to support the idea of Christmas represented there? Please answer these questions before God and your conscience.

Eppelein's argument about the duties of 'the office' was based on a strand of nineteenth century Lutheran interpretations of the *Zweireichelehre*, the doctrine of the two kingdoms, as separate tasks of church and government, which had become the dominant Lutheran model for the relationship of church and state by the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

*Bayerische Ostmark*). In 1933 he was appointed Bavarian minister for culture and federal leader of the National Socialist Teachers federation (NSLB). He died in a car accident on 5.3.1935. See Franz Kuehnel, *Hans Schemm. Gauleiter und Kultusminister (1891-1935)* (=Schriftenreihe des Stadtarchivs Nürnberg, 37), Nürnberg 1995; Baier, *Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns*, p. 38 footnote 33; also Staatsarchiv München, Akte Reichsstatthalter 174.

<sup>11</sup> 29.12.1928 *Fränkische Zeitung* Nr. 318, p.3. The article was wrong in one point: Lossin had never worked in New Guinea.

<sup>12</sup> 29.12.1928 Eppelein to Lossin, ND 30/42.

<sup>13</sup> Since the Reformation the *Zweireichelehre*, in varying interpretations and adaptations had been the philosophical-doctrinal place to think and debate the connections, obligations, separateness, and differences of church and state. Literature on the *Zweireichelehre* is vast. See for example W. Huber, U. Duchrow, L. Reith, *Umdeutungen der Zweireichelehre Luthers im 19. Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh 1975. Ulrich Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung: Traditionsgeschichte und systematische Struktur*

Yet, while for example Immanuel Kant, in the context of eighteenth century Prussia, could make a fine distinction that a cleric (or civil servant) was restricted in his expressions of political opinions while in office, but was free to do so as a private citizen in the privacy of his home and in public,<sup>14</sup> for Eppelein there was no 'public' private space for an officeholder. The 'office', and with it care for the organisation, Neuendettelsau, came first, second, and third. This was given an additional twist within the context of the late Weimar republic and its political climate of deepening crises and party rivalry. Party politics had to be avoided by Neuendettelsau, as Bavarian Lutheran donors and friends of the Neuendettelsauer Society had loyalties to a number of political parties and splinter parties. In addition, at that time (before the NSDAP's announcement of the concept of "positive Christianity"<sup>15</sup>) Eppelein's suspicion of the ideological position of the NSDAP towards Christianity was shared by many clerics and lay people within the Lutheran churches.

Eppelein's warning had no lasting effect. In April 1930 Neuendettelsau was informed that Lossin intended to participate in a national socialist flag dedication. Helmut Kern, then head of Neuendettelsau's section for home mission,<sup>16</sup> wrote to Lossin, re-iterating Neuendettelsau's view on party politics:

Es ist sowohl die Ansicht des Herrn Direktors wie Herrn Lauerers, der von Herrn Dir. Eppelein in der Sache besonders befragt wurde, wie des Lehrerrates, wie der Ausschüsse, dass jedem Angestellten unseres Hauses seine freie Meinung in politics gewährleistet werde, dass wir aber Rücksicht nehmen muessen auf unser Amt und Werk, das Menschen aller pol. Richtungen dient und auf deren Hilfe angewiesen ist. Diese Rücksicht verbietet uns jede

It is the opinion of the director, as well as Mr Lauerer, who was especially consulted by Dir. Eppelein about this matter, as well as [it is the opinion] of the teacher council, as of the board, that every employee of our house is to be granted his free opinion in regards to politics, but that we have to consider our office and organisation, which serves people of all political directions, and which depends on them. This consideration forbids us any

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*der Zweireichelehre*, Stuttgart 1970. The political changes in Germany during the Napoleonic era had brought major changes. In Bavaria, where the Lutheran church had been under a Catholic *summos episcopus*, the emphasis had been placed on the separateness of church and state, while in Prussia the connectedness and mutual responsibility of church and state had been the focus. Löhe, the founder of the Neuendettelsau society, had strongly argued for a separation of church and state for the sake of the church's independence, to a point that both in his writings and in the village of Neuendettelsau, where he was the local Lutheran pastor, he had tended towards establishing a theocracy. By the beginning of the twentieth century the *Schöpfungstheologie*, theology of creation, which was very strong at the nearby University in Erlangen, argued separation of church and state with a different emphasis, namely the state's right to act according to its own 'laws' and 'structures'.

14 See Immanuel Kant, 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?' (1783), Erhard Bahr (ed.), *Was ist Aufklärung? Thesen und Definitionen*, Philipp Reclam jun., Stuttgart 1976, pp. 11-13.

15 See chapter 'Positive Christianity' in this thesis.

16 Helmut Kern worked for the Neuendettelsauer society as Missionsinspektor from 1.5.1928 to 1.9.1933. After a brief period as parish pastor in Göggingen he became *Sonderbeauftragter für Volksmission in Bayern* of the Bavarian Lutheran church. See Günter Zwanzig, 'Helmut Kern, Pfarrer und Sonderbeauftragter für Volksmission (1892-1941)', Forssman, Bernhard (ed.), *Sie waren Uttenreuther: Lebensbilder einstiger Erlanger Studenten*, Erlangen 1993, pp. 132-134.

öffentliche parteipolitische Betätigung und Werbung.<sup>17</sup> | public party political activities or advertisement.

This time Neuendettelsau insisted on Lossin writing a statement, declaring that he would 'neither in this nor in a future case get in any way involved in political activities in a leading or speaking capacity'.<sup>18</sup> Lossin's resolve neither to make a statement, nor come to Neuendettelsau to talk about his relationship with the NSDAP,<sup>19</sup> led to the drafting of a statement by Neuendettelsau's board, the *Vereinigte Ausschuesse*, which was sent to Lossin to sign<sup>20</sup>:

Erklärung.

Ein Berufsarbeiter unseres Werkes kann sich nicht führend und im Auftrag einer Partei redend an der Arbeit einer politischen Partei beteiligen.

Lassen besondere Umstände dem Berufsarbeiter die Verkündigung des Wortes Gottes bei politischen Veranstaltungen aus volksmissionarischen Gründen wünschenswert erscheinen, so hat er die Anstaltsleitung vorher zu fragen und ihre Genehmigung einzuholen.

Pastor Lossin legen wir nahe, bei Gelegenheit aus der N.S.D.A.P. auszutreten.'

Ich erkläre mich mit obigen Sätzen einverstanden

Statement

An employee of our organisation may not participate in the work of a political party in a leading way or assigned by the party.

If special circumstances make it seem desirable to the employee to preach the word of God at a political meeting because of *volksmission* reasons,<sup>21</sup> then he has to ask the institution's leadership beforehand and seek their permission.

We suggest that Pastor Lossin resign from the NSDAP at some time.

I agree with these sentences<sup>22</sup>

When Lossin refused to sign<sup>23</sup>, the board, *Vereinigte Ausschuesse*, in consultation with the local Bayreuth group, decided to dismiss him. The cautiously formulated explanation given to Lossin by the chair of the board, Wirth, and recorded in the protocol of the board meeting<sup>24</sup> was 'loss of trust' of the Bayreuth group and 'experiences with Lossin over the last years'<sup>25</sup>. Neither Lossin's engagement with the NSDAP nor Neuendettelsau's statement of 9 May was mentioned. On the contrary Wirth assured Lossin that his membership of the NSDAP 'as such'<sup>26</sup> had played no role in the dismissal. Lossin, supported by Hans Schemm and the NSDAP Bayreuth, who made no secret that they regarded Lossin's party membership to be the primary factor<sup>27</sup>,

17 17.4.1930 Kern to Lossin, ND 30/42.

18 17.4.1930 Kern to Lossin, ND 30/42.

19 See 3.5.1930 Kern to Lossin, 6.5.1930 Lossin to Kern, ND 30/42.

20 On 9 May 1930, ND 30/42.

21 Meaning that the primary aim of attending was to evangelise the audience or broader population.

22 9.5.1930 Erklärung, ND 30/42.

23 Lossin did not sign this statement on the lines inserted for his signature, but put his signature below underneath his comment: "Zur Kenntnis genommen", 'seen and noted', dated Bayreuth, 27 May 1930, ND 30/42.

24 Meeting on 2.6.1930.

25 10 June 1930 Wirth to Lossin, ND 30/42.

26 10.6.1930 Wirth to Lossin, ND 30/42.

27. See for example 17.6.1930 Schemm to Wirth, ND 30/42:



appealed formally against his dismissal and demanded that detailed reasons be given. Threats were made against the Neuendettelsauer mission and the local group in Bayreuth. They were put rather bluntly by the NSDAP Bayreuth<sup>28</sup>, which promised to remember and revenge what was done to Lossin after the National Socialists came to power, and in a more diplomatic way by Schemm. The latter pointed out to the chairman of the board that having the same enemies meant that there should be closeness and unity between National Socialism and Christianity, and further that the NSDAP Bayreuth had a great number of members. Schemm supported Lossin's demand for the disclosure of proper reasons, in the absence of which he 'as the representative of the National Socialists for the region *Oberfranken*, as county leader and as member for the Bavarian Parliament had to understand the dismissal of Pastor Lossin as a serious insult and denigration of our party'.<sup>29</sup> Eppelein and Wirth, without giving any details on Lossin's sacking, reassured Schemm that Neuendettelsau had not intended to insult the party. Rather they were 'truly thankful' to the party for 'leading a holy war against theoretical and practical materialism, which destroyed the national community, *Volksgemeinschaft*'<sup>30</sup>. Neuendettelsau proceeded to involve Friedrich Klein, Pastor in Grafengehaig and party member of the NSDAP, as mediator.<sup>31</sup> Here the matter rested until late 1932 and early 1933 when Lossin repeatedly approached Neuendettelsau with demands for financial compensation.<sup>32</sup> While Neuendettelsau's lawyer<sup>33</sup> rejected the demands, the situation became tricky after the National Socialists

Es heisst nun wohl in dem Entlassungsschreiben, wie mir Herr Pastor Losin mitteilt, daß die Zugehörigkeit zur N.S.D.A.P. nicht bestimmend für die Entlassung gewesen sein soll, sondern daß andere Gründe dafür maßgebend wären. Durch diese Redewendung wird jedoch die Überzeugung der Öffentlichkeit nicht geändert, daß die Zugehörigkeit zur N.S.D.A.P. die Ursache sei. Diese Überzeugung wird solange in der Öffentlichkeit vorhanden sein, als nicht andere Gründe bekanntgegeben werden, falls solche vorhanden sein sollten.

The letter of dismissal states, as Mr Pastor Lossin informs me, that membership in the NSDAP had no relevance to the dismissal, but that other reasons were crucial. This phrase, however, does not change the conviction of the public that membership to the NSDAP was the cause. This conviction will remain with the public for so long, as other reasons are not given, if such should exist.

see also 1.10.1930 Klein to Steck, LKAN - ZMV 157.

28 Weber informed Wirth that he was threatened by the local NSDAP, that they would spread this in the press, and would let Adolf Hitler know, so that after the Third Reich began revenge would be taken. 10.6.1930 Prof. Weber to Obmann, ND 30/42.

29 17.6.1930 Schemm to Wirth, ND 30/42.

30 12.7.1930 Eppelein to Schemm, see also 27.6.1930 Wirth to Schemm, ND 30/42.

31 See 22.12.1930 Kern to Klein, ND 30/42:

Daß Du die Sache Lossin erledigt und so erledigt hast, danken wir Dir herzlich. Wir sind auch dankbar einverstanden, dass Du manches verschwiegen hast, was nicht unbedingt gesagt werden mußte.

We thank you dearly, that you have solved the case Lossin and in such a way. We also thankfully agree that you have kept some things quiet, which did not really have to be said.

For more information on Klein see Baier, *Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns*, especially p. 44.

32 19.12.1932 Eppelein to Prof Weber, ND 24/11. 14.3.1933 Unger to Eppelein, ND 30/42.

33 Dr Streicher, who was a member of the Neuendettelsauer society and a lawyer in Nuremberg. See 19.12.1932 Eppelein to Professor Dr. Weber, ND 13/1.

gained power and made a law (amongst others) that party members had the right to compensation for past political sufferings.<sup>34</sup> At this point another old party member, Dekan Friedrich Hanemann<sup>35</sup>, from Kulmbach, took over the negotiations, and brought about an outcome favourable to Neuendettelsau<sup>36</sup>, helped greatly by the fact that relations between Hans Schemm, now in charge of the whole region, and Lossin had gone sour.<sup>37</sup>

One outcome of the whole prolonged dispute between Neuendettelsau and Lossin was that already before 1933 Neuendettelsau had become very careful not to upset the NSDAP. In 1931 one party member, Hlasek, made allegations against Bock, a staff member of the Neuendettelsauer Mission. Eppelein warned Wirth, chairman of the Neuendettelsauer Mission, that Bock was not without fault, and that 'we do not want to unnecessarily provoke the National Socialists a second time'.<sup>38</sup>

What had Lossin done which was unacceptable to Neuendettelsau? It was certainly not, as Eppelein argued in 1946 during his denazification trial, acting against Jews.<sup>39</sup> Lossin

34 At this stage reasons other than political ones were particularly emphasised. See for example 17.3.1933 Eppelein an Unger, Bayreuth, ND 24/11:

Er ist ja doch seinerzeit nicht entlassen worden wegen seiner Zugehörigkeit zum Nationalsozialismus, sondern deshalb, weil er die inneren Voraussetzungen missen lies, welche un-sere Gesellschaft von seiten ihrer Berufsarbeiter erwarten muß.

He was not dismissed then because of his membership of the National Socialists, but because he lacked the inner prerequisites, which our society has to expect from their employees.

35 2.5.1933 Board meeting *Vereingte Ausschüsse* (ND 12/21 Protokollbuch S. 49). See also 10.4.1933 Eppelein to Hanemann, 15.5.1933 Eppelein to Hanemann, 7.7.1933 Eppelein to Hanemann, 10.7.1933 Hanemann to Eppelein, ND 30/42; 1.7.1933 Eppelein to Emil Unger, Bayreuth, ND 13/1. Eppelein mentioned that he had been a friend of Hanemann for a long time, and that Hanemann was a supporting member of the Neuendettelsauer Mission, and a very good friend of Hans Schemm.

36 It was agreed by Neuendettelsau and Lossin, that Lossin leaving the Neuendettelsauer mission would be called not a dismissal, but a parting according to mutual wishes. See protocol of board *Vereinigte Ausschuesse* 2.5.1933, ND 12/21 Protokollbuch p.49.

37 14.3.1933 Emil Unger an Eppelein, ND 30/42. Unger, a member of the Bayreuth group informed Eppelein about a talk he had with Schemm. Schemm, he reassured Eppelein, would not employ Lossin, because 'now the time for talking was over, and real work needed to be done'.

38 22.5.1931 Eppelein to Wirth, ND 13/32.

39 In 1946 Eppelein asked Adam Schuster for a declaration for Eppelein's impending denazification trial. Could Schuster, Eppelein wrote, testify that Lossin had been dismissed by Eppelein because he 'had fought in an un-biblical way against Judaism' (in unevangelischer Weise gegen das Judentum). Schuster's declaration narrated a slightly different turn of events:

Als derzeitiger Geschäftsführer der Missionsanstalt darf ich Herrn Stadtpfarrer Eppelein bestätigen, daß unter seiner Leitung als Missionsdirektor einer unserer Heimatmissionare wegen seiner extremen Einstellung zur Judenfrage zuerst disziplinarisch bestraft und dann etliche Jahre später - 1930 - aus seinem Dienst entlassen wurde.

As business manager of the mission society at the time I would like to attest for our town's pastor Eppelein, that under his leadership as mission director one of our home missionaries was first disciplinarily punished because of his extreme attitude to the Jewish question and then some years later - in 1930 - dismissed from his position.

26.9.1946 Eppelein to Schuster, 14.11.1946 Schuster, 'Bestätigung'; ND 22/5.

had been dismissed three years after the initial allegations were made by the *Centralverein*. Rather it was a mixture of several related issues which caused his dismissal. He had acted for another group besides Neuendettelsau. He had risked alienating supporters of the mission, and with it loss of donations. He had disobeyed orders, an unforgivable offence for Neuendettelsau, which since its foundation in the late nineteenth century had placed great importance on obedience and discipline.<sup>40</sup> And, last but not least, he had done *public* work for a political party, the NSDAP.

The guidelines developed by the society in 1930 to regulate political involvement of its staff neither stated that employees could not be members of a political party, nor that the mission would not make political statements. Rather the board tried to disentangle party politics and the politics of the Neuendettelsauer mission. The mission and its public representatives were not to be seen to support a specific party line.<sup>41</sup> In this the guidelines for mission employees of 1930 followed earlier policies developed for the mission's journal *Freimund*.

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In 1930 when the Bayreuth group asked Epplein for support against the threats by the local NSDAP, Epplein replied that Lossin's dismissal had been done primarily because of the local group's lack of confidence in him. The responsibility for the action taken, Epplein further pointed out, lay with the chairman of the society. See 13.6.1930 Epplein to Prof. Weber, ND 30/42. In 1946 Epplein emphasised that the decisions were made 'under his leadership'. 26.9.1946 Epplein to Schuster, ND 22/5.

40 Seminarists, for example, were not allowed to become engaged before their final year of studies. One young seminarist, who was destined for New Guinea, but was found out to have a secret fiancée in his second year was as a punishment sent to Brazil instead.

41 In 1932 the president of the Bavarian Lutheran church, Friedrich Veit, wrote a confidential letter to all Bavarian Lutheran pastors, in which he asked them to consider their congregations as a whole, as well as the unity of the church and its pastors, and to refrain from all public party political activities. See Lindner, Gerhard, 'Friedrich Veit, Kirchenpräsident in Bayern', in Forssman, Bernhard (ed.), *Sie waren Uttenreuther: Lebensbilder einstiger Erlanger Studenten*, Erlangen 1993, pp. 61-62 (quoting Kantzenbach, F. W., 'Der Einzelne und das Ganze', in *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Kirchengeschichte*, 47, 1978, pp. 131-132).

## Public Politics and Party Political Neutrality: The Journal *Freimund* during the late Weimar Years

The liberal-democratic state has failed, what has to come is a political entity, which matches the character of the German people just as Fascism the Italian, and in many ways Bolshevism the Russian-Asiatic character.

*Der liberal-demokratische Staat hat Bankrott gemacht, was kommen muss, ist ein Staatswesen, das der Eigenart des deutschen Volkes ebenso entspricht als der Faschismus der italienischen und der Bolschewismus in vieler Hinsicht der russisch-asiatischen Eigenart.*

(*Freimund* 17.9.1931, S.294)

In 1926, still under director Rudolf Ruf, the Neuendettelsauer Mission had introduced guidelines for the political section of its journal *Freimund*. The weekly journal *Freimund* was the flagship of the society's publishing house, the *Freimund Verlag*, which also published pamphlets, books, calendars, and flyers. Published since 1855, the *Freimund's* full title was *Freimund's kirchlich-politisches Wochenblatt für Stadt und Land: Organ einer öffentlichen Mission vom Standpunkt evangelisch-lutherischen Christentums* (*Freimund's church-political Weekly for towns and country: organ of a public mission from the standpoint of Protestant-Lutheran Christianity*). In 1927 Friedrich Eppelein took over the editorship from director Ruf and pastor Zindel.<sup>42</sup> One year later the format was enlarged from 27.6 cm by 21 cm to 31.3 cm by 23.5 cm, and a new header added, designed by a local Franconian artist, Trost.<sup>43</sup> At that time the *Freimund* sold a little over 2000 copies in Germany and abroad, which assuming four to five readers per copy would have amounted to a minimum of about 8000 to 10.000 readers.<sup>44</sup> Its core readership was local, concentrated in Bavaria, but it was also bought by fellow Lutherans abroad, mainly in Australia, America and Brazil. The *Freimund* provided general articles, biblical meditations, book reviews, announcements of mission

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42 Eppelein stayed editor until no. 8 in 1937. During Eppelein's oversea travel mission inspector Helmut Kern took over the editorship from No. 7/1929 to No. 12/1930. No. 14/1930 to No. 34/1933 were edited jointly by Eppelein and Kern, and Nos. 35/1933 to 41/1933 jointly by Eppelein and Keyßer. In 1933 only Nos 36 to 40, 42 and 43 were solely edited by Eppelein, while from No 44/1933 to No. 12/1934 the *Freimund* was under the editorship of both Eppelein and mission inspector Helmut Heinrichsen. For further details of editorship until No. 22/1941, when the *Freimund* was not allowed to be published any more, see Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen*, LKAN Ms 1302/24c, p. 368.

43 The title stayed the same, but main title and subtitle were switched in the new header: *Organ einer öffentlichen Mission vom Standpunkt evangelisch-lutherischen Christentums. Freimund's kirchlich-politisches Wochenblatt für Stadt und Land*.

44 The figures are taken from Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen*, LKAN MS 1302/24c, p. 369. For 1933 Helmut Kern gives the number of copies published each week as 3200. See Friedrich Eppelein (ed.), *Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und seine 4 Arbeitsgebiete*, 1933, pp. 38-40.

and evangelisation meetings and events, as well as several inserts such as the *Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt*, and a section *Aus dem Leben* about political developments in the church and the German nation, and a section for children. From 1 January 1933 the *Freimund* was published with a new header, designed by the artist Rudolf Schäfer, and a new title, *Freimund: Lutherisches Wochenblatt für Kirche und Volk* (Freimund: Lutheran Weekly for church and Volk).

The 1926 guidelines for the political section of the *Freimund* focused on what contribution Lutheran Volksmission could offer the nation—or rather the German people—and coincided with a strengthening of ‘Volksmission’ within the Neuendettelsauer society. Internal disputes had led to a restructuring of the sub-section for Volksmission, and the employment of Friedrich Epplein as the society’s first *Volksmission* superintendent<sup>45</sup> to head the section. Epplein had until then been a pastor in Bayreuth, who had shown a strong interest and commitment to evangelisation and home mission.<sup>46</sup>

Neuendettelsau had followed a wider trend within church circles from the nineteenth century on to implement strategies at home under the label ‘Volksmission’ to counter the consequences of modernisation and secularisation in Germany, the most pressing of which was the continuing mass exodus of church members.<sup>47</sup> After 1918 the end of the *Staatskirchentum*, the regional organisation of Lutheran churches under the local sovereign as *summus episcopus* (head of the church), raised the urgent problem of church reform, especially as the Weimar Republic, which replaced the old system, was religiously neutral and tolerated a plurality of religious and anti-religious movements. The problem of how the Lutheran churches under these changed political and social circumstances could remain people’s churches, ‘Volkskirchen’, brought forth a multitude of different *Volkskirchen* and *Volksmission* concepts. Within this broad

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<sup>45</sup> The title was *Volksmissions Inspektor*.

<sup>46</sup> See Fontius p. 203.

<sup>47</sup> Fontius details the crisis in the Neuendettelsauer Mission from 1920 to 1928, with Steck’s demands for reform at the centre. Fontius portrays Epplein’s aims as the opposite to that of Steck: instead of becoming part of the church, the mission should stay independent. Instead of the church organising the Home Mission, and the society concentrating on the Foreign Mission, the society’s home mission activities should be expanded. Fontius places Epplein within a pietistic tradition with the tendency to form *ecclesiolas in ecclesia*. One of the consequences of the ongoing fight between Steck and Ruf was the resignation of both men in 1928, and Epplein’s election as director. Note also the difficulties the Bavarian church had with Neuendettelsau widening its activities to include the *Volksmission* in 1925—this was seen rather as a responsibility of the church than of a mission society. See Fontius pp. 187–205.

spectrum Neuendettelsau took a conservative position.<sup>48</sup> The general longing was for a return to virtues and life styles of a rural, pre-industrial society, where the church was still ‘in the middle of the village’. While not focused on politics per se, but on general and specific issues of Christian lifestyle, ethics, and morality, the border into the political arena was frequently transgressed. Ideologies and philosophies, as well as actions and decisions based on them, were seen as the genuine home ground of Volksmission endeavours. Christians had to be encouraged to live as Christians in the wider community, and the wider community had to be encouraged to live as Christians. Thus politics had to be influenced to support the making and stabilising of a Christian Volk.<sup>49</sup>

Driven by the ideal of a unified people, free of political factions and fights, the *Freimund* wanted to offer its readers ‘education in political thought’<sup>50</sup> and ‘strengthening of moral elements within politics’. It is interesting that the guidelines, which were structured into ten points, used the word *Volk* alone or in connection with other words 14 times, while *Politik* appeared seven times, and *Staat* only four times. The focus was on the nation not as a political entity based on a constitution, but on the nation as a people. The reverberations of a kind of shock over the collapse of the monarchy at the end of the war were still strong, as point six explicitly sets out:

Die lutherische Ethik fordert nicht ein Eintreten für eine bestimmte Staatsform. Wohl aber liegt in ihrer Konsequenz ein Eintreten für einen starken Staatsgedanken.<sup>51</sup>

The Lutheran Ethic does not demand advocacy for a specific form of government [state]. But its ramifications point to advocacy for the concept of a strong government [state].

Approval of specific political parties was likewise explicitly rejected.

48 For an overview and analysis of *Volksmission* concepts see Kurt Meier, ‘Die zeitgeschichtliche Bedeutung volksskirchlicher Konzeptionen im deutschen Protestantismus zwischen 1918 und 1945’, in Kurt Meier (edited by Kurt Nowak), *Evangelische Kirche in Gesellschaft, Staat und Politik 1918 - 1945: Aufsätze zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte*, Berlin, 1987, pp. 16-39. Kantzenbach raises the problem of how far Neuendettelsau’s *Volksmission* concepts, especially Epplein’s, were influenced by Christian Keyßer’s foreign mission theories. See Kantzenbach, pp. 232-236. Kantzenbach overlooks the importance of Karl Steck; see Fontius; see also for example Stoessel and Steck, ‘Kann die Erfahrung auf unserem Missionsfeld fruchtbar gemacht werden in unseren Heimatkirchen?’, in *Lutherisches Missionsjahrbuch 1927*, pp. 55-65 (Is it possible to utilise fruitfully the experiences on our missionfield for our churches at home?).

49 See for example Hoekendijk for *Volkstums*-theology, see Kantzenbach for connections with Erlanger Theology of Elert and Althaus; to analyse these ideological connections in detail cannot be the aim of this thesis, and it has to suffice to point towards this general location. Further studies into the Theology of Friedrich Epplein, or Helmut Kern, to name but a few influential people within the Neuendettelsauer society, would be desirable.

50 The element of education and discipline is a central Neuendettelsau tradition from Löhe’s time on. The strong focus of pedagogy in Keyßer’s mission method has led to it being called ‘Volkspädagogische Missionsmethode’, Volks-pedagogic mission method.

51 November 1926 “Richtlinien fuer den politischen Teil des Freimunds”, ND 16/31-33.

...der 'Freimund' [darf] nicht im Dienste irgendeiner bestimmten politischen Partei stehen ... <sup>52</sup>	...the <i>Freimund</i> [must] not stand in the service of any specific political party...
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The *Freimund*, edited during the following years by Friedrich Eppelein, thus refrained from supporting specific political parties, and concentrated instead on commenting on political trends and decisions in articles and in the special weekly rubric *Politische Rundschau*, 'political overview'. Nevertheless it kept to the conservative national right. Within this spectrum the *Freimund*'s approval shifted between several parties, depending on the day to day decisions made, but the journal was consistent in the movements and parties it opposed: everybody and everything supporting either Communism, Catholicism, or the Treaty of Versailles and reparation payments.

Consequently the social-democratic government of Hermann Müller (1928-1930) was regularly represented in a negative way. The implementation of the Young Plan in 1930, a renegotiation of Germany's World War I reparation payments,<sup>53</sup> was identified in the *Freimund* as the main culprit for the Depression,<sup>54</sup> and played a central role in the journal's criticism.<sup>55</sup> Politicians in general<sup>56</sup>, but especially the conservative Catholic party *Zentrum*<sup>57</sup>, and the Social Democrats<sup>58</sup> were held responsible for extinguishing any German foreign policy<sup>59</sup>; Germany, the nation of 'Versailles-Weimar', was being exploited and close to collapse<sup>60</sup>—the latter being a development welcomed by the *Freimund*.

<sup>52</sup> November 1926 "Richtlinien fuer den politischen Teil des Freimunds", ND 16/ 31-33.

<sup>53</sup> A new committee, chaired by the American Owen D. Young, met in Paris on Feb. 11, 1929, to revise the Dawes Plan of 1924. It reduced the amount due from Germany, set up the Bank for International Settlements to handle the transfer of funds, and ended foreign controls on German economic life. On 22 December 1929 a referendum against the Young Plan, initiated by an alliance of right-wing parties, the NSDAP, the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP) and the Stahlhelm, failed with only 13.8% of voters against the Young Plan, and it was ratified by the German government in March 1930. The onset of the worldwide depression, however, made it impossible for Germany to meet the required payments. See for example Kent, Bruce, *The spoils of war: the politics, economics, and diplomacy of reparations, 1918-1932*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

<sup>54</sup> See for example *Freimund* 1930, Jg.76, pp. 31, 47, 62.

<sup>55</sup> See for example *Freimund* 1930, Jg.76, pp. 22, 30, 38, 62, 79, 86, 94, 102f, 111. Apart from the Young Plan, which was at the centre of the *Freimund*'s reporting on foreign politics, the Londoner Flottenkonferenz (pp. 38, 47, 62, 78), and the deutsch-polnische Liquidationsabkommen (p. 47) were singled out for criticism.

<sup>56</sup> *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 30, 47, and 63.

<sup>57</sup> See *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 79, 94, 111.

<sup>58</sup> *Freimund* 1930, Jg.76 p. 86, see also p. 62. The Social Democrat government in Prussia lead by Otto Braun was severely criticized and labelled 'rule of Marxism' and a 'dictatorship'. (*Freimund* 1930, Jg.76 pp. 47, 111 and 134).

<sup>59</sup> See *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 38, 62, 102. Especially a foreign policy following the spirit of Frederik the Great, Ranke and Bismarck. (*Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 38 und 86); in this connection a lack of German military might was especially deplored. (*Freimund* 1930, Jg 76, pp. 47, 62).

<sup>60</sup> *Freimund* 1930, Jg 76, p. 86, see also pp. 62 and 93.

Initially the *Freimund* was sceptical of the minority government of Heinrich Brüning (1930-1932), whom it labelled a puppet of the Catholics, and the chancellor of 'Young-Germany'.<sup>61</sup> Yet slowly some of his policies, especially the introduction of the state of emergency, gained the approval of the *Freimund*.<sup>62</sup> The plurality of parties within a parliamentary democracy, and the dependence of government on coalitions and compromises, was something deeply suspect to an organisation that in its own confines valued hierarchical structures and saw seniority as a better way to reach decisions than majority consensus. When French troops were withdrawn from the Rhine region euphoria set in, and further success in foreign policies, even a dismantling of the Treaty of Versailles, seemed possible.<sup>63</sup> In contrast to its responses to the government of Müller, the *Freimund* now strongly supported the government of Brüning and the Weimar Republic—it seemed a lesser evil than possible civil war and a takeover by Bolsheviks:

Es ist unverantwortlich zu behaupten, die wichtigste politische Aufgabe sei die Zerstörung des deutschen Staates. Wissen denn die, die diese Parole ausgeben, so absolut sicher, was dann kommen wird? Krieg im Innern wäre das Furchtbarste, was uns begegnen könnte.<sup>64</sup>

It is irresponsible to declare that the most important task is the destruction of the German state. Are those, who issue this call, so absolutely sure, what will come then? Civil war would be the most terrible thing which could happen to us.

The dismissal of parliament and the announcement of new elections for September 1930, brought about by the support of a Socialist motion by the NSDAP and parts of the DNVP, caused the *Freimund* to worry about the stability of Germany.

Es geht bei den bisherigen Auseinandersetzungen um den Bestand des gegenwärtigen Staates. Die radikalen Strömungen auf beiden Seiten streben nach der Diktatur. Was dazwischen ist, tritt für die Aufrechterhaltung verfassungsmässiger Zustände ein und stellt sich geschlossen hinter Hindenburg. Wenn das deutsche Volk nicht in endlose, politische Wirren gestürzt werden soll, bleibt nur dieser Weg

The disputes hitherto are about the continuing existence of the present state. The radical currents on both sides aim for a dictatorship. Those in the middle between them advocate keeping constitutional conditions and unite in support of Hindenburg. If the German people are not to be thrown into endless political chaos, only this path remains.

61. Brüning was called a "Puppe der 'katholischen Aktion'" und "Zentrumskanzler Youngdeutschlands". (*Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 135). *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 134.

Es ist doch sehr fraglich, ob der Zentrums-Kanzler wirklich der grosse starke Mann ist, für den er vielfach gehalten wird.

It is very questionable whether the Center Party-Chancellor is really the strong man he is often assumed to be.

62 'Aber das muß man der Regierung Brüning lassen, sie hat den Mut, unpopulär zu sein. Sie verschleierte nicht den Ernst der Lage und trifft radikale Massnahmen.' (*Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 192); Der *Freimund* also agreed with the basic direction of his financial policies, as well as the controversial use of §48, which enabled the introduction of the state of emergency. See *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 219f, 265.

63 *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 240. Apart from securing East Prussia and the Bavarian *Ostmark*, the *Freimund* argued for the liberation of the Saar, the incorporation of Austria into the Reich, and a solution of the Colonial question. See *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 159, 166, 240, 282.

64 *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 240, for an emphasis on unity and *Volksgemeinschaft* see also pp. 167, 192, 219f.



The *Freimund* used the time before the elections to emphasise the necessity for political unity within Germany, and the importance of Christian education, customs, and values. It published a survey of all main political parties<sup>66</sup>, and directed readers, without recommending any one party specifically, to vote according to the character of the candidate, ensuring that they supported only a ‘consciously Protestant parliamentarian’.<sup>67</sup>

It was widely anticipated that the elections would bring an increase in members from radical parties on both sides. Yet the outcome was a complete surprise: the NSDAP became the second strongest party. Within just over two years the number of National Socialist members for parliament had grown from 12 to 107.<sup>68</sup> The *Freimund* commented ambivalently on the unexpected success. There was on one hand the ‘reckless agitation’ of the party during the election campaign, and the looming question whether a National Socialist government would tolerate the Christian churches and church schools. On the other hand the votes for the NSDAP were motivated by an ‘awakening of nationalistic protest against a politic of emasculation’, and by hopes for social reforms. The *Freimund*, supporting protest against the Versailles treaty and the consequences of the Depression, predicted that ‘the German revolution is not over, but has just started’<sup>69</sup>. Yet the NSDAP did not, as the *Freimund* and many others expected, become part of a governing coalition, but refused to co-operate with Brüning’s Party *Zentrum*, which in turn formed closer relationships with the Social Democrats.<sup>70</sup> With the economic, social, and political crisis deepening, the *Freimund* turned once more against the government and the Weimar Republic as a whole. Again, as during the election, personality and character were what counted most:

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<sup>65</sup> *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 265.

<sup>66</sup> Only four recipients of the questionnaire were named, the others showed only the general party name; this indicates a greater familiarity with these four parties, the Christlichen Volksdienst, the Deutschnationale Partei, the deutsches Landvolk und the Bauernbund; the *Freimund* was especially close to the Christlicher Volksdienst at that time. The candidate for that party was the Lutheran theology professor Strathmann. See for example W. v. Loewenich, *Erlebte Theologie: Bewegungen, Erfahrungen, Erwägungen*, München 1979, pp. 160ff.

<sup>67</sup> *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 292-297. Readers were given the answers from a questionnaire the *Freimund* had sent to all major parties. The emphasis was on internal questions, especially fundamental general issues such as the preferred form of government, or the status of Christianity. Only 4 of the 18 questions dealt with foreign policies—the focus was firmly on issues at home.

<sup>68</sup> See Scholder, Klaus, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich. Vol 1 Vorgeschichte und Zeit der Illusionen 1918-1934*, Ullstein, Frankfurt/M, revised edition 1986, p. 161.

<sup>69</sup> *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 320f.

<sup>70</sup> See for example Martin Broszat: *Die Machtergreifung. Der Aufstieg der NSDAP und die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik*, München 1994<sup>5</sup>, p. 124.

Daß ein Diktator, der Herz und Gewissen auf dem rechten Fleck hat und etwas vom Regieren versteht, unter Umständen keine schlechte Einrichtung ist, beweist der Name Mussolini. Es wird nicht wenige in Deutschland geben, die sich nach einem solchen Mann sehnen!<sup>71</sup>

That a dictator, who has heart and conscience in the right spot and understands how to govern, might in certain circumstances not be a bad institution is proven by the name of Mussolini. There will be not a few people in Germany, who are longing for such a man!

A moral renewal, the *Freimund* argued, was necessary to overcome the crisis in Germany and in Germany's foreign relations. The NSDAP's attempts to censor some cinema films<sup>72</sup> and publications seemed hopeful starts, which the *Freimund* supported. The NSDAP's Anti-Semitism was shared by the *Freimund*, as were concerns about the "Jewish problem". Actions against Jewish shops were excused as desperate deeds in desperate times by desperate people. The readers of the *Freimund* were encouraged to buy "if possible" from shops of fellow Christians.<sup>73</sup> The *Freimund* declared:

Man sollte ferner darauf achten, daß ein Hauptgrund, daß viele am heutigen Staat irre geworden sind, darin besteht, daß sich unter seiner Duldung Schund und Schmutz in unerhörter Weise breit gemacht haben. Der Kampf gegen den heutigen Staat holt aus dieser Tatsache seine sittliche Berechtigung.<sup>74</sup>

One should also note that one of the main reasons that many lost faith in the present state is because, enabled by its tolerance, garbage and filth spread in an un-heard of way. The fight against today's state finds in this fact its moral justification.

Summarizing the year 1930 the *Freimund* painted a gloomy picture, with nationalistic trends the only rays of hope, and it was these that might lead the German people towards, not a political revolution, but the true reformation the country needed.<sup>75</sup>

Die nationale Bewegung muß zur religiösen werden. Der Ruf 'Deutschland erwache!' muß übergehen in den anderen: 'Land, Land, höre des Herrn Wort!' ... Nur auf der Grundlage der Christentums ist der Aufbau der Volksgemeinschaft möglich.

The nationalistic movement has to become a religious one. The call 'Germany awake' has to blend into the other one: "Country, country, hear the word of the Lord!"<sup>76</sup>...Only on the foundation of Christianity is it possible to build the 'Volks'-community.

By early 1931 the internal crisis of the Weimar republic had reached such a point that it was decided to devote a number of issues of the *Freimund* specifically to political parties in order to address party fanaticism and 'idolatry'. The editors,

71. *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 345.

72. The *Freimund* asked for the resignation of the minister for the interior, Wirth, who had supported the screening of the film made after Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. (*Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 417). The film premiered on 4 December 1930 in Berlin. The NSDAP demonstrated against it and demanded the film be banned. Conservative papers supported this demand. Under pressure from the Deutschnationalen, der Reichswehr und some states, such as Thuringen und Braunschweig, Wirth asked the section dealing with permits for films, the Film-Oberprüfstelle, to make another assessment. For a detailed account see Martin Broszat, *Die Machtergreifung*. pp. 60-64.

73 See for example *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 353, 365.

74. *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, p. 335.

75. 'Unser Vaterland im Jahre 1930', *Freimund* 1930, Jg. 76, pp. 425f.

76 Jeremiah 22, 29; the Luther translation here uses the word "Country", whereas the King James English Version translates "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD".

Friedrich Eppelein and Helmut Kern, were well aware that this was close to overstepping the border of commenting on politics from a Christian point of view, and entering the arena of party politics. Thus the special issue *Kirche und Partei*, church and party,<sup>77</sup> carried an editorial introduction which appealed to its readers to read and judge the matters discussed without fanaticism, and gave the assurance that the journal was committed to party political neutrality. All major parties, DNP, SPD, NSDAP, and Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst, were, it said, given the opportunity to get their voice heard. The *Freimund* hoped to enable Christians to understand and influence political parties:

Es steht hinter jeder Partei eine Weltanschauung. Haben wir uns als Kirche und als Volksmission auch nicht in die Parteipolitik der einzelnen Parteien zu mischen, so haben wir als Männer der Kirche doch die Pflicht die Weltanschauung, die hinter den Parteien stehen, gründlich zu studieren und den Versuch zu machen auf diese Weltanschauungen vom Standpunkt des Christentums Einfluß zu nehmen.<sup>78</sup>

Behind every party is an ideology [idea about the world, philosophy]. Albeit not having the task as church and as Volks-mission to interfere with the party politics of individual parties, as men of the church we nevertheless have a duty to study thoroughly the ideology which is behind parties, and attempt to influence these ideologies from a Christian point of view.

In a letter to fellow editor Helmut Kern, Eppelein regarded the issue as a success, and affirmed that they should continue with follow-up issues as planned, despite the rather weak contributions by the DNP and the Christlich Sozialer Volksdienst:

Weitaus am geschicktesten hat der Vertreter der Nationalsozialisten und dann der Vertreter der Sozialdemokraten seine Sache gemacht.<sup>79</sup>

The representative of the National Socialists had done far better, followed by the representative of the Social Democrats.

Eppelein suggested clarifying the differences and similarities of the main political parties by giving representatives a number of questions, which would focus on the relationships of the other major parties to the NSDAP, and the NSDAP's relationship with them.<sup>80</sup> This he hoped could become a starting point for parties to come closer, and

<sup>77</sup> 29 January 1931, Vol. 77, No. 5.

<sup>78</sup> Helmut Kern, 'Kirche und Partei. An unsere Leser', *Freimund* 29 January 1931, No. 5 Jg 77, p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> 30.1.1931 Eppelein to Helmut Kern, ND 22/22.

<sup>80</sup>

1. Warum können Deutschnationale und Nationalsozialisten sich nicht finden? Diese Frage müßte von Deutschnationalen und einem Nationalsozialisten beantwortet werden.
2. Die Frage: "Warum können sich Nationalsozialisten und Sozialdemokraten nicht finden?" müßte von einem Sozialdemokraten und einem Nationalsozialisten beantwortet werden.
3. Die Frage: "Warum können sich Nationalsozialisten und Christlicher Volksdienst nicht finden?" müßte von einem Nationalsozialisten und einem Vertreter des Christlichen Volksdienstes behandelt werden.

1. Why can't *Deutschnationale* and National Socialists get together? This question would have to be answered by a *Deutschnational* and a National Socialist.
2. The question: 'Why can't National Socialists and Social Democrats get together?' would have to be answered by a Social Democrat and a National Socialist.
3. The question: 'Why can't National Socialists and Christlicher Volksdienst get together?' would have to be answered by a National Socialist and a representative of the Christlicher Volksdienst.

might help members of Christian congregations to stay 'despite all differences of party political affiliations, true parts of the organism of the Christian church, or Christian congregation'. His suggestions were realised in the two March issues of the Journal, nos.11 and 12, while two of the five preceding volumes focused on National Socialism, and another two on the 'Jewish question'.<sup>81</sup>

This public quest for clarification about the National Socialists, and how they fitted in with the hopes, fears and desires of the *Freimund* and its readership of Bavarian Lutherans, was accompanied by more private and discreet enquiries of the Neuendettelsauer Mission.

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30.1.1931 Eppelein to Helmut Kern, ND 22/22.

<sup>81</sup> *Freimund* No. 6 Jg. 77, 5 February, entitled 'Der Nationalsozialismus und wir Christen', (National Socialism and we Christians), offered a long article by Eduard Putz, pp. 40-44. Since 1929 Eduard Putz had been giving talks which supported National Socialism, and convinced many of his fellow pastors to join the NSDAP. See Helmut Baier, *Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns*, p. 106. Issue No 7. was entitled 'Nationalsozialismus und Weltmission', (National Socialism and World Mission), No. 9, 26.2.1931 and No. 10, 5.3.1931 focused on the 'Jewish question'.

## 'Positive Christianity'?

### Discussions between Neuendettelsau and the NSDAP in Nuremberg 1931

The welfare [good] of our evangelical Lutheran church ... and the salvation of our dear German people have to be placed above anything else by us.

*Das Wohl unserer evangelischen lutherischen Kirche ... und das Heil unseres lieben deutschen Volkes muss uns ueber allem stehen.*

(Eppelein to fellow pastors 19.3.1931)

With the NSDAP broadening its base of supporters, groups within the Lutheran church began to think about how they could work together with the National Socialists.<sup>82</sup> In January 1931 home mission superintendent Helmut Kern formulated in a circular the task he saw developing for the Neuendettelsau Volksmission<sup>83</sup>

Können wir, dürfen wir ruhig zusehen, wie z.B. der lawinenhaft anwachsende Nationalsozialismus sich in der Hand weltanschaulich unklarer Führer von der christlichen Weltanschauung wegentwickelt? Nachdem die offizielle Kirche natürlich in diesem Punkt Entscheidendes nicht unternehmen kann, ist es nicht Pflicht der Volksmission nach Mitteln und Wegen zu suchen, um dieser gewaltigen Bewegung—nicht politisch, darin ist ja die Partei festgelegt—weltanschaulich zu dienen?

May we, should we, stand and watch for example how National Socialism, which is growing like an avalanche, develops away from Christian ideas under the influence of ideologically unclear leaders? As the official church, of course, is unable to do anything decisive in this regard, is it not the duty of the Volks-mission to look for means and ways to serve this mighty movement—not politically, in this the party is firm—but ideologically?

On 25 March 1931, initiated by the Neuendettelsauer Volks-Mission and chaired by Eppelein, a confidential discussion was held between members and supporters of the Neuendettelsauer Mission and representatives of the National Socialist teachers' federation (NSLB) to discuss the relationship between the Lutheran church and the National Socialists.<sup>84</sup> This meeting in Nuremberg<sup>85</sup> was to be a preliminary discussion,

<sup>82</sup> The party, as Scholder points out, was far more coy. This was particularly so because of the religious neutrality set out in the NSDAP's party program. See Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*, vol 1 pp. 243ff.

<sup>83</sup> January 1931, Helmut Kern, circular 'Unsere Heimatmission – unser Reichtum – unsere Not' p. 2, UELCA Synod reports and other reports.

<sup>84</sup> Eppelein had had earlier dealings with Schemm long before the negotiations in regard to the dismissal of Franz Lossin. Eppelein notes in his autobiography that Schemm and he had known each other for twelve years in Bayreuth. Teaching belonged to Eppelein's duties as pastor, and he had taught at the same school as Schemm. On Saturday, 24.1.1931, Eppelein visited Schemm in Bayreuth, and summarised the visit as follows:

Schemm erklärte sich gerne bereit eine solche Versammlung, wie wir sie im Auge haben, in die Wege zu leiten. Diese Zusammenkunft soll gleichsam eine Vorbesprechung sein für eine evtl. Zusammenkunft in Anwesenheit von Adolf Hitler. Schemm kann aber erst Näheres sagen, wenn er die Dinge des Reichstages überschauen kann

Schemm agreed to organise such a meeting as we have in mind. This meeting was meant to be like a preliminary discussion for a possible meeting with Adolf Hitler present. But Schemm would only be able to say something more detailed, when he could see where things were going in the Reichstag.

which, it was envisaged, would be followed by further meetings. For the leader and founder of the teachers' federation, Hans Schemm, talks with Neuendettelsau's Volks-Mission branch were also part of a wider agenda. Convinced that National Socialism and the Christian religion belonged together, he tried to encourage pastors to join the NSDAP and the teachers' federation.<sup>86</sup>

The timing of the meeting could not have been worse. Just four weeks before the long-scheduled event a public dispute erupted between the Bavarian Lutheran Church and the NSDAP over an attack by Julius Streicher, editor of the anti-Semitic national socialist paper *Der Stürmer*, against church president Friedrich Veit. Streicher had responded to a remark critical of 'voelkische' Christianity by Veit, by publishing the following request in his journal *Der Stürmer* on 26.2.1931:

Achtung! Wer kann Auskunft geben über die  
Abstammung des Kirchenpräsidenten D.Veit?

Attention! Who has information about the ancestry  
of church president D. Veit?

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30.1.1931 Eppelein to Mission inspector Kern, ND 22/22. See also 19.3.1931 Circular Eppelein to fellow pastors, ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'. Franz Kühnel (p. 202) dates the meeting 'with high probability' wrongly on 8 April.

<sup>85</sup> The protocol had the title "Streng vertrauliche[n] Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der Neuendettelsauer Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP", strictly confidential discussion between representatives of the Neuendettelsauer Volksmission and representatives of the NSDAP. There seem to be two copies of this protocol available in archives. One, used by Kuehnel, in the archives of the Bavarian Lutheran Church in Nuremberg, the other in the Neuendettelsauer Mission archive. The list of participants shows 31 men, invited both by the Neuendettelsauer Mission and by the NSLB. Eppelein mentioned that Neuendettelsau invited 6 pastors (amongst them probably Glossner, Schmidt, Tilling, Hoffmann and Klein). In addition 4 staff members attended (Eppelein, Kern, Koller, Stoessel). (19.3.1931 Eppelein to fellow pastors, ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen', also 13.3.1931 NS Lehrerbund to Kern, ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen').

Participants were, apart from Schemm, Pastor G. Braeuniger from Koenigshof, who was pro German Christians (see Baier, p. 53); Pastor O. Glossner from Nuremberg, representing the evangelischer Bund, whose motto was 'Protestant until dying, and German until death', 'evangelisch bis zum Sterben und deutsch bis zum Tod' (see Baier p. 66); Pastor H. Griessbach from Erlangen, then working with young people for the Bavarian Protestant *Jungmaennerbund* (see Baier pp. 84 and 98); Pastor Hanemann from Neudrossenfeld near Bayreuth; Herrmann from Bayreuth; Pastor Hoffmann from Burk; Ittameier from Graefenberg; Kiessling from Ergersheim; Pastor Klein from Grafengehaig, who later became leader of the German Christians in Bavaria, Koch from Igensdorf; Pastor Kornmacher from Erlangen; trainee pastor Vikar M. Maedl, who later became leader of the German Christians in the districts Oberpfalz and Niederbayern, and Gauleiter for the same region of the National Socialist Protestant Pastors Federation (NSEP) (see Baier, pp. 71 and 85); Pastor F. Moebus from Kairlindach, later Bavarian leader of the NSEP (see Baier p. 118); Pfister from Urfersheim; trainee pastor Vikar E. Putz from Noerdlingen near Munich; theology student Rausch and F. Rausch from Nuremberg; Pastor M. Sauerteig from Ansbach, Party member of the NSDAP since 1925 and later member of the German Christians (see Baier pp. 125 and 206); Pastor Schmidt from Busbach, and Schmidt from Unterleinleiter; Pastor A. Schramm, member of the German Christians, and later member of the board *Ehrenrat* of the NSEP (see Baier p. 85); Pastor H. Schulz from Nuremberg, who later became regional leader of the German Christians in Schwaben (see Baier, p. 75); Sondermann from Rothenburg; Pastor Tiling from Pfaffengreuth; Pastor M. Weigel from Nueremberg, member of the German Christians (see Baier p. 316); Grimm from Ansbach, politician and member of the Landtag.

<sup>86</sup> See Klaus Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*, Vol 1, pp. 243-244; Other such meetings were for example Schemm's appearance at the convention of the Inner Mission in Dresden on 21.4.1931, see Baier, *Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns*, p. 39 and Kühnel pp. 184-244. See also 19.3.1931 Circular Eppelein to Brethren [Amtsbrueder], ND file without number, 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'.

The church protested vehemently, not so much against the anti-Semitism of the journal, but against the insinuation its president was of Jewish stock.<sup>87</sup> Eppelein agreed that the claim Veit was of Jewish origin was an insult to the man and the organisation he headed:

Wir sind uns alle einig, daß jene Anfrage nach der Abstammung des Herrn Kirchenpräsidenten - recht gelinde ausgedrückt - keine glückliche Frage gewesen ist. Es hat wenig dazu gedient, die Autorität der Kirche, die in unserer autoritätlosen Zeit für unser Volk von solcher Bedeutung ist, zu stärken<sup>88</sup>

We all agree that the question about the ancestry of the church president was, to put it mildly, not a happy question. It has done little to strengthen the authority of our church, which is of such importance for our people [*Volk*] in times so lacking [established] authority.

On behalf of the Bavarian Lutheran Church Friedrich Meiser, member of the Bavarian consistory, and later successor to Veit, contacted Eppelein and asked for a private and confidential talk.<sup>89</sup>

Meiser had no jurisdiction over the director of the Neuendettelsauer Mission, but he could bring a lot of persuasive power to bear. While legally Neuendettelsau was an independent society, its relationship with the Bavarian Lutheran Church was close but ambiguous. The ambiguity is contained in its full name, 'Society for inner [home] and outer [foreign] Mission in the spirit of the Lutheran Church e.V. [registered Society]'. Ideologically the society was meant to be an auxiliary of the church for as long as the church neglected its duties to conduct proper mission work at home and abroad. The society's existence was based on a perceived lack of interest of the church in the work it did, and it thus had to be an independent organisation. In real terms the society was dependent on the church for personnel and financial support. Through its organisational structure—members of the society had to be members of the church—it constituted a group within the church, an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, with its own traditions and loyalties.

Meiser and Eppelein met in Nuremberg a week before the meeting and negotiated a compromise. The meeting would take place, but there would be a preparatory meeting of all clergy previously invited by Neuendettelsau. That same day Eppelein distributed a circular in which he stressed the informal and unofficial nature of the gathering. He instructed the pastors to be at Lutherhaus in Nuremberg one hour earlier to discuss amongst themselves 'certain questions in regard to tactics', and asked them to be 'disciplined, wise and united'<sup>90</sup>:

<sup>87</sup> See Baier, *Die Deutschen Christen Bayerns* p. 16; *Freimund* 77 Jg. Nr.11 vom 12.3.1931 p.82.

<sup>88</sup> Eppelein made these remarks to his colleagues before the actual meeting; see Protokoll 'Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP', 25.3.1931; ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'.

<sup>89</sup> 16.3.1931 Meiser to Eppelein, ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'.

<sup>90</sup> 19.3.1931 Circular Eppelein to colleagues (ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen.'). Franz Kühnel overestimates the significance and meaning of the phrase 'strictly confidential' in the protocol of the meeting. He concludes wrongly that neither the church hierarchy nor the Party was informed; he further argues that, because nearly all present were party members that therefore discussions were held frank and

Das Wohl unserer evangelischen lutherischen Kirche (diese Worte im tiefsten Sinn verstanden) und das Heil unseres lieben deutschen Volkes muß uns über allem stehen

The welfare of our evangelical Lutheran church (these words understood in their deepest meaning) and the salvation of our dear German people have to be placed above anything else by us.

During the preparatory meeting<sup>91</sup> Eppelein set out the agenda in broad terms:

In einer Zeit, wo an und für sich unser deutsches Volk so zerrissen ist, erscheint es uns als ein Unrecht, wenn solche, die auf dem Boden der gemeinsamen Liebe zum Volk einander sich nahestehend wissen, gleichgültig aneinander vorübergehen würden.<sup>92</sup>

During times when generally our German people [Volk] are so torn apart, it would seem an injustice to us, if such people, who are conscious of being close to each other on the basis of shared love for the people [Volk], should pass each other and remain indifferent.

While the NSDAP's devotion to the German people was undoubted as far as Eppelein was concerned, the party's attitude towards Christianity was the problem which needed clarification, if Neuendettelsau and the church wanted to consider closer ties with the NSDAP.

Paragraph 24 of the party program<sup>93</sup> stated that the party aimed for a 'permanent revival of our nation' from 'within' on the basis of a 'positive Christianity'. This, and the identification of the enemy in this context, 'the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us', sounded very promising for Volks-mission circles. The meaning of 'positive Christianity', however, remained unclear, especially as the criterion for religious freedom was its compatibility with the 'decency and morality of the Germanic race'. Also there were voices within and around the NSDAP which were decisively anti-Christian.<sup>94</sup>

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'free of all tactical considerations'. (F. Kühnel, p. 202). The *Consistorium* of the Bavarian church was informed. The representatives of Neuendettelsau were aware of the difficult and tense situation, and had prepared tactics accordingly. Because this meeting was to bring church and party closer, which was in Schemm's interest, Schemm would probably also have been careful in the choice of his words and arguments.

91 There is a protocol, but apparently no attendance list of the preparatory meeting. Eppelein mentioned in his circular that Neuendettelsau had invited 6 pastors; it seems that this number was in addition to the staff of the Neuendettelsauer Mission, Eppelein, Kern, Koller, and Stössel. Thus it can be assumed that at least 10 men attended the preliminary meeting. See Protokoll "Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP", 25.3.1931.

92 Protokoll "Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP", 25.3.1931 (ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen').

93 Full text of § 24 (translation by Yad-Vashem): We demand freedom for all religious denominations, provided they do not endanger the existence of the State or offend the concepts of decency and morality of the Germanic race. The party as such stands for positive Christianity, without associating itself with any particular denomination. It fights against the Jewish-materialistic spirit *within* and *around* us, and is convinced that a permanent revival of our nation can be achieved only from *within* on the basis of: *Public Interest before Private Interest*.

94 In the course of the preparatory meeting Dinter, Ludendorff and Streicher were mentioned. Confused by the diversity of National-socialist circles, the question was raised who could be regarded the authoritative voice for the NSDAP. Pastor Klein argued that the National socialists were a movement which grew and changed, and that disparate opinions voiced by party officials should be ignored. Only what Hitler said was authoritative. (The idea of a movement finding its course was a presentation the party fostered at the time; it had the advantage of disabling critical interrogation.) For a similar line of argumentation see also Christian Keyßer, 'Die völkische Frage im Lichte der Heidenmission', *Freimund* 30.7.1931, No. 31, p.



It was thus agreed that the meeting should stay clear of specific details, and concentrate on broad ideological questions. The aim was to find out:

Darf unsere Neuendettelsauer Volksmission bei ihrem Dienst am gemeinsam heissgeliebten deutschen Volk und Vaterland in der NSDAP mehr oder weniger einen Kampfgenossen sehen oder nicht? <sup>95</sup>

Can our Neuendettelsauer Volks-mission in regard to its service to our jointly beloved German people and fatherland see in the NSDAP more or less a comrade-in-arms, or not?

During the main meeting there were three speakers, Hans Schemm for the NSDAP, Friedrich Klein as mediator, and Friedrich Epplein for the Neuendettelsauer Volksmission.

Schemm argued that the NSDAP, which was close to and supported Christianity, was the only party which could unite the German people, and defend the nation against Bolshevism. The NSDAP was fighting Bolshevism directly, and endeavoured to implement positive changes: the principles of leadership, which would replace parliamentary Democracy, military training for the German people, revision of the treaty of Versailles, struggle against unemployment, and racial purity. The concept of racial purity, endorsed by the NSDAP, posed no threat to Christianity, but, Schemm said, was an essential part of it, and beneficial for the spreading of Christianity through mission work.

Wir stellen den Rassegedanken darum so scharf heraus, weil wir glauben, dass es eine ausgesprochene Forderung des Christentums ist, das die Rasse sauber gehalten wird, weil sonst das Instrument, das das Christentum verbreiten soll, unrein wird und nicht mehr funktioniert. Wir wollen dem Christentum Völker gegenüberstellen, die auch in der Lage sind das Christentum zu verstehen und innerlich zu verarbeiten. Das ist bei rassisch verdorbenen Menschen nicht mehr so möglich als bei reinrassigen. ... Wir müssen um des Christentums willen und um des Instruments willen, das dieses Christentum verarbeiten soll, die Rasse betonen. <sup>96</sup>

We emphasize the concept of race so stringently, because we believe, that it is an important demand of Christianity to keep the race pure, as otherwise the instrument which is to spread Christianity will become impure and will no longer function. We want Christianity to be faced by peoples, who are capable of understanding Christianity and of handling it internally. This is less possible for racially corrupted human beings than for racially pure. ... For Christianity's sake and for the sake of the instrument, which has to handle this Christianity, we have to emphasize race.

Friedrich Klein was meant to give a mediating talk<sup>97</sup>, but actually set out the rather extreme position of the pro-Nazi wing within the church<sup>98</sup>, and supported Schemm's

235: 'Rosenberg ist nicht die Partei ... Sein Buch ist nicht das Parteiprogramm.' - 'Rosenberg is not the party. ... His book is not the party programme.'

95 Protokoll 'Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP', ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'.

96 Protokoll 'Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP', 25.3.1931 (ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'). Klaus Scholder (p. 244), quoting similar sentences, points out that the triviality of the phrases used by Schemm in speeches worked particularly well, because they seemed to point towards secrets and mysteries, which lifted the individual beyond her- or himself.

97 Kern mentioned this during the preparatory meeting. See Protokoll 'Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP', ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'.

main arguments. Showing in detail that the program of National Socialism and Christian ideals were in harmony, and that the Nazi's ideology was in fact based on Christianity, Klein concluded that collaboration with the NSDAP was the duty of the German church and of all its pastors.<sup>99</sup>

Eppelein would not go so far. He started off with what National Socialism and the Volks-mission shared: care for the German people and nation, opposition to groups and ideas coming out of the Enlightenment such as materialism, group and individual egoism, individualistic liberalism, and Bolshevistic collectivism. Picking up Schemm's point about the racial characteristics of every human being, Eppelein declared:

In der grossen Weltschoepfung unseres Gottes hat ja nicht nur jeder einzelne Mensch, sondern auch jedes einzelne Volk und jede einzelne Rasse mit der Eigenart zu dienen, die ihr der Schoepfer als Gabe anvertraut hat.

Within the great creation of the world by our God not only every human being, but also every people and every race has to serve with that characteristic, which God has entrusted it with as a gift.

Yet while Schemm argued that proper attention to racial concepts was beneficial for Christianity and its growth, Eppelein turned Schemm's argument around: the right type of Christianity, a nationalistic-völkisch one (which can be found within the Protestant, not the Catholic church), would enrich the German people, and enable it to fulfil its duties amongst the world's nations. In the long run National Socialism, Eppelein declared, would have to leave religious neutrality behind, and decide whether they wanted to go with the Ultramontanism of the Catholic church, or the nation-focused approach of the Lutherans. Consequently the two main issues Eppelein wanted clarified both related to §24 of the NSDAP's party program: the status of denominations, including denominational schooling, and the status of racial concepts within the National Socialist ideology. The National Socialist denial of citizenship for everybody 'not of German blood' was not commented on at any stage.<sup>100</sup> The problem Eppelein had were formulations setting out a one-sided relationship between religion and race, namely that religious freedom was granted as long as religious denominations did not 'offend the concepts of decency and morality of the Germanic race.' Eppelein wanted to be assured that racially based structures would not be the means to reform Germany,

98 Friedrich Klein was at that time the centre for a loosely organised group of National Socialist pastors in Bavaria. See Scholder, p. 244.

99 Protokoll 'Streng vertrauliche Aussprache zwischen Vertretern der ND Volksmission und Vertretern der NSDAP'; ND Akte o.Nr. 'Aus dem Zeitgeschehen'.

100 Even when addressing questions of racial policy no mention was made of §4:

Staatsbürger kann nur sein, wer Volksgenosse ist.  
Volksgenosse kann nur sein, wer deutschen Blutes  
ist ohne Rücksicht auf Konfession. Kein Jude kann  
daher Volksgenosse sein

Only Nationals (*Volksgenossen*) can be Citizens of  
the State. Only persons of German blood can be  
Nationals, regardless of religious affiliation. No  
Jew can therefore be a German National.

Rosenberg, Alfred, *Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei. Das Programm der Bewegung herausgegeben und erläutert von Alfred Rosenberg*, Deutscher Volksverlag Dr E. Boepfle, München 1933., p.18 – English Yad Vashem translation.

but would be a consequence of a religious rejuvenation and re-awakening of the German people:

Nicht die Rassenfrage kann Ausgangspunkt und Grundlage einer Volkserneuerung sein, sondern nur die wirkliche Hinkehr zum lebendigen Gott und seinem Christus, welche dann ganz von selber auch die Beachtung der in den Rassen vorliegenden Schöpfungsordnungen in sich schließt und zwar in dem Masse, das nicht menschlicher Leidenschaft oder gar Verblendung, sondern dem heiligen Willen unseres Gottes entspricht.

The race-question cannot be the starting point and foundation for a rejuvenation of the Volk, but only the genuine turning to the living God and his Christ, which then would automatically contain the observance of the orders of creation, which exist in [the form of] races; but this in such a way that concurs not with human passions or even infatuation, but with the wishes of our God.

For Eppelein Protestantism was to be central to the National Socialist party, and not National Socialism to the Lutheran Church.<sup>101</sup> And Eppelein was not quite convinced that the party, despite all the good things it had to offer Germany, had the right attitude towards Christianity.

[W]ir dürfen nicht glauben, daß der allmächtige Gott abhängig wäre von irgend einer Partei und deshalb uns recht geben würde, wenn wir ohne gewissenhafte Prüfung der Wahrheitsfrage, nur geleitet von Opportunitätsrücksichten uns von irgendeiner Partei ins Schlepptau nehmen lassen würden. ... Wir wünschen uns nichts sehnlicher, als daß in Deutschland eine Partei entstehen würde, oder daß sich die NSDAP zu einer solchen Partei entwickeln würde, daß die evangelischen Gewissen beim Anschluß an die NSDAP nicht durch Gedanken der falschen Opportunitätsrücksichten und damit an eine Verletzung der Wahrheit beunruhigt werden.

We should not believe that the Almighty God was dependent upon a party, and would therefore approve, if we, without conscientious exploration of the question of truth, only led by opportunism, are taken in tow by any party. ... There is nothing we long for more, than that a party should come into existence, or that the NSDAP would develop into such a party, so that joining the NSDAP Protestant consciousness would not be disturbed by thoughts of wrong opportunism and with it harm to the truth.

Eppelein thus dismissed suggestions for direct collaboration of pastors with the NSDAP for the time being.<sup>102</sup> While both the NSDAP and Volks-mission would benefit from strengthening each other, the Volks-mission's work would continue to focus on the church's internal tasks. Helmut Kern, *Volksmission* superintendent of the Neuendettelsauer Mission, supported his director:

Wir wollen aber Brüder sein in der Front, wir mit unseren geistigen Waffen, Ihr mit Euren Schwertern, die klirren können. Wenn es keine Möglichkeit mehr gibt mit geistigen Waffen zu kämpfen, dann nehme auch ich das Schwert in die Hand. Aber solange ich noch mit geistigen Waffen gegen den Bolschewismus kämpfen kann, muß ich so gegen ihn kämpfen

But we want to be brothers at the frontline [against Bolshevism], we with our spiritual weapons, you with your swords, which clash [rattle]. If there is no opportunity to fight with spiritual weapons any more, then I, too, will take up the sword. But as long as I am able to fight with spiritual weapons against Bolshevism, I have to fight against it in this way.

<sup>101</sup> Klein rejected Eppelein's demands:

Was Miss. Dir. Dr. Eppelein fordert, ist schon mehr als das, was die Partei tun kann.

What Miss[ion] dir[ector] Dr. Eppelein demands is already more than the party can do

<sup>102</sup> During the discussion detailed suggestions were made about how NSDAP and pastors could collaborate. This ranged from encouragement to join the party (Klein), to literary and scientific endeavours for the shared cause (Hanemann), to a more distant and conscious approach of party political neutrality, in order to be able to reach Social Democrats and Communists (Kornacher).

Eppelein suggested further meetings, as closer collaboration might be possible sometime in the future:

<p>Wir erwarten uns von der NSDAP viel. Wir haben uns bis jetzt noch mit keiner Partei in ähnlicher Weise in Verbindung gesetzt und ausgesprochen.</p>	<p>We expect much from the NSDAP. Until now we have not made contact and had discussions with any other party in this way.</p>
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What Schemm sought from the Neuendettelsauer Mission was not what Eppelein wanted to give. Schemm wanted pastors to take up party membership. Eppelein offered the expertise of the Volks-mission to guide the party in its endeavours to bring about an all-encompassing reform of the nation. It was this hope, that the National Socialist rising would be a kind of spiritual and moral reformation, (with the additional hope that those church organisations with the right experience and knowledge, like Neuendettelsau, would be listened to) which would stay with many leading members of the Neuendettelsauer Mission until the mid-1930s.

The Neuendettelsauer Mission had moved a long way from neutrality in party politics to a stage where even the cautious Eppelein saw the chance of a united front. In entering discussions with the NSDAP the Neuendettelsauer mission had gone closer to identifying with one party than ever before. In addition, particular members and supporters of the society were much more strongly committed to the NSDAP.

While the talks with representatives of the NSDAP were at this stage on a regional level, further talks with Hitler had been envisaged. Neuendettelsau's trump card, which lifted it from being a regional society which only undertook Volksmission in Bavaria, to being an organisation capable of contributing to the nation as a whole, was its foreign mission expertise. Its success had been to Christianise tribes, peoples. Its approach, the Keyßer method, showed that it could help cleanse and rejuvenate a people without destroying its *Volkstum*. The National Socialists wanted a new racially pure Germany, and Neuendettelsau could assist, as it knew how to combine Christianity with respect for *Volkstum* and racial purity. Foreign mission expertise, which could be applied and translated into appropriate actions at home, was what Neuendettelsau perceived as its entrance card into national politics.

Plate 2:  
Freimund, Header 1932 and 1934



Nr. 10. Neuenbittelsau, Donnerstag 5. März 1931. 77. Jahrgang.

Inhalt: Betrachtung. — Die Judenfrage in christlicher Beleuchtung. — Aus dem Leben unserer Kirche. — Buchbesprechung. — Anzeigen.

# Die Judenfrage in christlicher Beleuchtung.

Sonntag, Ostern.



Nr. 18. Neuenbittelsau, Donnerstag, den 3. Mai 1934. 80. Jahrgang.

Inhalt: Betrachtung. — Arbeitendes Volk. Von Missionsinspektor Koller, Neuenbittelsau. — Arbeit und Geheimmission. Von Missionsinspektor Dr. Christian Rejter, Neuenbittelsau. — Die Entwicklung der kirchlichen Lage seit dem 27. Januar 1934. — Anzeigen.

# Deutsche Arbeit.

Sonntag Rogate.

### **III**

## **Separating the Field**

The relationship between the Volksmission and the foreign mission, between the home organisation and the overseas mission field, was complex. At the same time as Neuendettelsau tried to convince local politicians that the mission's special expertise abroad made it an ideal advisor on matters of national reform at home, its Lutheran sister organisations in America and Australia were asked to consent to the restructure and separation of the overseas field because of the changed political climate in Germany and resulting financial necessities. The focus of the Lutherans in Neuendettelsau was on dealing with the crisis at home. Yet their proposed solution had the potential to revive old tensions and create new problems in New Guinea.

### Theile's objections

Under no circumstances will the Administration allow a nation within the nation to be formed

*Die Administration wird unter keinen Umstaenden zulassen, dass ein Staat im Staate sich bildet*

Friedrich Otto Theile, 13.1.1932

Theile and the UELCA begrudgingly had to accept Neuendettelsau's argument to have its own mission field. They questioned whether the envisaged increase in donations in Germany was worth the added burden of financing two instead of one field administration, depot, hospital and so on. Would it not be better, Theile asked in a passionate attempt to keep transnational Lutheran co-operation, if funds were used more efficiently to spread God's kingdom?<sup>1</sup> But as the Australians, too, were in financial difficulties as a consequence of the Depression, they were in no position to challenge Neuendettelsau's claims that the only way to overcome financial hardship was for Neuendettelsau to take sole responsibility for a separate mission. German donors were becoming increasingly nationalistic and insistent on supporting only a German-run mission field, Neuendettelsau asserted.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 13.1.1932 Theile to Boards for Missions of the ALC, UELCA and Neuendettelsau, ND 53-31.

<sup>2</sup> See for example 29.1.1932 Stolz to Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche, Obmann K. Wirth; 26.2.1932 Epplein to Stolz; 18.5.1932 Stolz to Prof. Dr. Ulmer, Pfr. Ruf, Dir. Dr. Epplein, ND 54/21-3

Neuendettelsau's wish to have its own mission in New Guinea meant that the Mission it had founded in 1886 would have to be cut into two separate fields. At this stage the Rheinische Mission was again in charge of the Madang area. As the American Lutherans were not prepared to pull out of mission work in New Guinea altogether, the negotiations focused on how to best divide the Finschhafen Mission between the German and American Lutherans. The unity of the Lutheran Missions New Guinea of the 1920s was now giving way to smaller and smaller regional entities. Theile lamented to Wilhelm Flierl, son of the mission's founder Johan Flierl:

So wird das Werk Deines Vaters zerstückelt, noch ehe er die Augen zugemacht hat und so wird das Ziel verrückt, das er zuletzt sich gesteckt, und in dessen Verfolgung ich ihm treu zur Seite stand: die herzliche Kooperation der drei Kreise in drei Erdteilen an dem einen Werk in Neu Guinea.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the work of your father is being fragmented before he has closed his eyes and thus the goal is shifted, which he last set himself, and in the pursuit of which I stood abidingly at your father's side: the cordial co-operation of three circles in three continents for the one work in New Guinea.

Worldwide Lutheran churches and synods were uniting. In America the Iowa Ohio and Buffalo Synods had just merged to form the American Lutheran Church. But in New Guinea, the unity of the Lutheran missions had come about through the necessities of looking after two orphaned missions in the wake of the war and the loss of control of German mission societies over their mission fields. The desire of the German mission societies in Barmen and Neuendettelsau to reinstate a pre-war order and with it their undivided responsibility for an overseas mission field led to the reestablishment of these former partitions. Neuendettelsau's desire for a politically united Germany and the perceived need to accommodate the rising nationalism at home relegated concerns about other unions, such as that with their Lutheran partner churches, or that of New Guineans within the mission field.

Separating the Finschhafen Mission into two parts was no easy task, and all partners—Americans, Australians and Germans—were again locked in passionate and complex negotiations. The details put forward by Neuendettelsau at that stage on how to divide the Finschhafen field made Theile suspect that other than economic and pragmatic motives were at play in the Germans' endeavour to get a field under their sole control. In January 1932 Theile laid out his concerns in a long letter responding to Eppelein's demands and arguments, and sent it to all three partner organisations. In it Theile reminded Eppelein that in 1928 during the annual meeting of white field personnel in New Guinea, which Theile had attended and which had focused on preparations for the Brisbane negotiations, Georg Pilhofer had failed to convince his colleagues of a three-

<sup>3</sup> 28.11.1931 Theile to W. Flierl, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.



fold plan for a radical restructure of the mission. The plan involved the division of the field, the introduction of Kate as a lingua franca, and the purchase of an aeroplane<sup>4</sup> to bring supplies from the coast to inland New Guinea, and was aimed, so Pilhofer said, at facilitating the gradual transformation of the diverse peoples of New Guinea into one people, one *Volk*. Theile had opposed the idea as a transgression of mission work, which would have led to the creation of a theocracy, a *Kirchenstaat*. Theile did not shy away from telling Epplein bluntly, that Pilhofer's failed plan seemed to be the blue print for Neuendettelsau's recent demands. 'In the suggestions by Neuendettelsau', Theile wrote, 'all three', the division of the field, Kate as lingua franca, and a push inland, 'are resurrected'.<sup>5</sup> Theile warned Epplein against any ideological and political aspirations in that direction:

Die Administration wird unter keinen Umstaenden zulassen, dass ein Staat im Staate sich bildet was ihr niemand verdenken kann.

Unsere Aufgabe wird es sein, unsere Eingebornen so zu fuehren und zu leiten, dass sie nicht in den Gegensatz zur Administration geraten, sondern dass sie sich friedlich nach den Richtlinien entwickeln, die eine Gesetzgebung, der man das Wohlwollen gegen die Eingeborenen gewiss nicht absprechen darf, ermoglicht.<sup>6</sup>

Under no circumstances will the Administration allow a nation within the nation to be formed, and no one can argue against that.

Our task will be to guide and lead our natives in such a way that they do not get into opposition to the Administration, but that they develop peacefully according to the guidelines, set out in legislation which one cannot deny is well-meaning towards the natives.

In this letter to Epplein Theile not only recalled the discussions of 1928, but also implicitly referred to the rather embarrassing dealings with the Administration the previous year, for which he—somewhat unfairly—blamed Pilhofer.

When Otto Theile prepared to visit New Guinea in 1930, Pilhofer sent him a long and detailed list of complaints, many of which they had already discussed a year earlier during the Brisbane negotiations, ranging from mistreatment of natives by Australian officials and their indifference towards native welfare to the detrimental effect of taxation and recruiting on native health and social life. Theile decided to act on Pilhofer's information. To ensure maximum impact of the complaints, Theile sent a letter to the Administration—and a copy to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs—announcing his visit to Rabaul and summarizing the fundamental issues he wished to discuss.<sup>7</sup> In his opening paragraphs Theile stated that the question of co-operation between the Administration and the Mission had not 'in any way been

4 The plane was bought in the mid-1930s to ease the burden on Neuendettelsau's foreign exchange: the purchase was thus a consequence of German government policy restricting the transfer of money abroad.

5 13.1.1932 Theile to BFM of the ALC, UELCA and Neuendettelsau, ND 53-31.

6 13.1.1932 Theile to BFM of the ALC, UELCA and Neuendettelsau, ND 53-31.

7 15.7.1930 Theile to His Honour The Administrator, Rabaul, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1.

settled', although both were working 'to further the welfare of the native races of New Guinea'. Evoking the spirit of the League of Nations' mandate system gained the immediate attention of the department. Two years earlier Australia had been summoned to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations and only narrowly avoided a serious reprimand.<sup>8</sup> Australia was now determined to see that letters such as Theile's were dealt with internally rather than reaching Australia via the League of Nations. Several sentences caught the eye of the official in Canberra reading and marking the letter:

[T]hose officials which are really in closer touch with the natives, are more often a law unto themselves ... At rare intervals one [Patrol Officer] comes along who tries to understand them [the natives], others are indifferent, others are brutal, but each gives a fresh interpretation to the regulations he administers. ... The native has no redress, and as conditions are, he has actually no opportunity of appeal. Bewildered in his mind, his body knocked about (policeboys with knuckledusters are not a rarity) he loses all confidence in the Administration.<sup>9</sup>

Taxation did not, Theile asserted, take regional differences into account, and 'ruthless collection of taxes' especially in the Morobe District had led to 'a form of forced labour':

[W]e are under the impression that taxation is imposed on, and extracted from the very poor inhabitants of the mountain regions, in order to force them into the hands of the recruiters.

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<sup>8</sup> In October 1931 Theile gave a detailed recollection of his meeting with Wisdom in Rabaul in 1931 and warned Epplein not to harbour any plans to contact the League of Nations. A few years earlier 'a Mr. Lugard' (Lord Lugard) had criticised New Guinea using a letter by an unnamed mission. Theile confided to Epplein that the Administrator, who had never managed to find out who wrote that letter, had suspected that it was the Lutherans and had asked Theile about it. Theile, who did not seem too confident himself that it might not have been one of his colleagues in the field, wrote to Epplein, that as the Administrator had inquired about specific people 'I was able to tell him with a good conscience about the ones named, that they had nothing to do with it'. Theile advised Epplein to turn to Geneva only as a last resort after all avenues in New Guinea and Australia had been tried unsuccessfully. And to do so with proper documentation, and possibly together with other missions, such as the Rheinische Mission or the Methodist mission, led by Reverend Cox in Rabaul. Theile explained to Epplein:

Ich habe den Eindruck, dass die Regierungskreise hier eine ausserordentliche Angst haben, dass sie einmal in Genf angegriffen werden koennten. Es ist ihnen sehr viel daran gelegen, dort in gutem Ansehen zu stehen, und sie wuerden es ohne Zweifel dem entgelten lassen, der sie dort in ein schlechtes Licht setzt.

I have the impression that government circles here have an extraordinary fear that they might one day be attacked in Geneva. It is very important to them to be held in high esteem there, and without doubt they would take it out on anybody who would give them a bad name there.

Theile's letter was meant to address some fundamental policy problems, and he thus send copies to Pilhofer, the American and Australian mission boards, as well as field superintendent Lehner. 3.10.1931 Theile to Epplein, ND 25/31. In 1927 the Administration was forced to send Judge Monty Phillips to inquire into labour recruiting in the Morobe District. Some of the reports had come from the Lutherans and the complaints were then in part substantiated—to the embarrassment of the Administration. See Ian Willis, *Lae: Village and City*, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> For further accounts of police violence see for example August Ibrum K. Kituai, *My Gun, my Brother. The World of the Papua New Guinea Colonial Police 1920-1960*, University of Hawaii Press 1998 [Pacific Islands Monograph Series 15] and Bill Gammage, *The sky travellers: journeys in New Guinea 1938-1939*, Calton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1998.

Theile conceded that work experience was good for the natives, but the system of recruiting was out of control and birthrates were declining, as often 10% or more of the male population were away from their villages:

As we survey our figures, we find ourselves as gravediggers of a dying people, and we do not relish that position.

Informed by the Department for External Affairs, the Prime Minister's Department took action. It demanded a thorough answer from the Administrator about all the allegations made by Theile. Under pressure from Canberra the Administration set out to defend itself. When Theile passed through Rabaul on 11-13 September 1930 the Administrator was absent, but Theile was granted an interview with Harold Page, the government secretary, instead.<sup>10</sup> On his way back to Australia on 15 December 1930 Theile finally managed to meet Administrator Wisdom in Rabaul. By that time Wisdom was well prepared. A 'dissection' of Theile's letter formed the basis of the discussion. The Administration had collated excerpts from patrol reports, correspondence by the mission's superintendent, Stephan Lehner, a list of all its field officials of the Morobe district from 1927 to the present, and figures for taxation and indentured labour. With the help of this material every point Theile's letter had raised was either disproved or put in doubt.<sup>11</sup> Theile explained to Eppelein that when he got to the Administrator 'my writing had been emasculated':

Konnte ich in einem einzigen Punkt meine Aussage nicht aufrecht erhalten, verlor auch alles Uebrige seine Kraft. Jeder Satz meines Schreibens war sezirt worden, zu jeder Behauptung waren die Gegenbeweise da.<sup>12</sup>

If I could not sustain my statement on one single point, everything else lost its power. Every sentence of my writing had been dissected, for every claim there was counter evidence.

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<sup>10</sup> 23.9.1930 Memorandum by H. Page, Government Secretary, Central Administration for The Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1. Harold Page was the brother of Earle Page, head of the Country Party and Minister of the Lyon's government, and presumably alert to political ramifications. Also, Theile had informed the Administration of his visit beforehand. It is possible that the Administrator chose not to be available.

<sup>11</sup> Extracts from letter of Rev. F.O. Theile of Lutheran Mission to Administrator, dated 15/7/1930, together with comments. Attached to 15.12.1930 Memorandum by Evan A. Wisdom, Administrator, for The Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1. The comment countering allegations of indifferent, brutal officials is revealing of the tactics used by Administration staff and Wisdom himself. It stated that should Theile 'attempt to revive ancient history and quote Hawkes', the government officer found guilty in 1927, to counter that 'adequate steps' had been taken.

<sup>12</sup> 3.10.1931 Theile to Eppelein, ND 53-31. Theile's language, particularly his references to emasculation and dissection, betrayed a sense of personal humiliation. At the time Theile wrote to Eppelein Pilhofer was on holidays in Germany and was questioning Theile's character and integrity in his dealings with the Administration in Neuendettelsau and in letters to Theile. Theile added some further recollections in his own defence. Already during his visit to the mission field, Theile explained, some of the missionaries had voiced doubts about the accuracy of some of Pilhofer's allegations, particularly Wullenkord, from the Rheinische Mission in Madang, and Stefan Lehner.

On 15 December, the day of the meeting with Theile, Wisdom informed the Prime Minister's Department, that Reverend Theile had 'entirely changed his opinion'. Theile had admitted, Wisdom reported, that any lack of co-operation was 'in the main' the mission's fault, and that 'a feeling of jealousy against the Administration' drove some missionaries, who 'had been performing functions of the Government by means of native village councils'. Theile had withdrawn his allegations, which had been based on wrong information:

He found that his information had been one-sided, and that although the Rev. Pilhofer was one of the most intelligent missionaries, he was rather biased by his feelings in regard to local government by the Administration, and was inclined to be fanatical.

Theile apologised unreservedly both to the Administration and the Department of External Affairs for having been 'misled by unreliable information'. He added a few face-saving suggestions for minor improvements in his letter to the Administrator, but mainly confirmed Wisdom's summary of their meeting.<sup>13</sup>

Otto Theile did not understand, or did not want to see, that he had been out-manoeuvred by Wisdom. Faced with tensions amongst the staff of the mission and disagreements about policies, various opinions of local government officers, and the thorough refutation of his allegations by the Administration, the only way Theile could make sense of these conflicting points of view was by making them into a contest based on emotions of the German mission staff, particularly Pilhofer, which were in Theile's opinion fraught with dubious aspirations and morality. He wrote to Wisdom:

[F]or many years the Mission was, in that district and its hinterland, the only authority for the natives, an authority which they respected and trusted, and the missionaries in their turn grew accustomed to such authority and to the position of trust they occupied in the minds of the natives. Now that the Administration is slowly but surely extending its sphere of control in that region, there certainly occurs some little friction.<sup>14</sup>

Theile's explanation was more than a diplomatic way of retreating with a minimum of personal humiliation. Talking and writing to Administrator Wisdom, Theile explained what he saw as the field's, and particularly Pilhofer's, transgression within the Lutheran doctrinal model of the two kingdoms or realms. After agreeing with Wisdom that Pilhofer's critique was wrong, Theile had to explain Pilhofer's 'bias' without jeopardising the agreement he and Richter had reached previously with the government in return for allowing the German personnel to stay. Prime Minister Hughes had

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<sup>13</sup> 29.1.1931 Theile to His Honour The Administrator; 30.1.1931 Theile to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1.

<sup>14</sup> 29.1.1931 Theile to His Honour The Administrator, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1.

insisted in 1921 that the Lutheran Mission must not 'prejudice civil administration' or 'Australian and British interest', and had been assured by Theile and his American Lutheran colleague, Friedrich Richter, that only 'sincere Christians' would be selected who would 'scrupulously render the things of Caesar unto Caesar'. Richter had said: 'We have no political aims, no nationalistic tendencies but are actuated only by the desire to serve, to serve God and the natives'.<sup>15</sup> Describing Pilhofer's critique of the government as 'fanaticism' and a desire for 'Theocracy' allowed Theile to avoid references to national pride and resentment, and to remain within the safety of a religious framework. Pilhofer's and the mission's offence had not been disloyalty but hubris. Instead of remaining focused on the tasks within the religious realm, the mission had, as Theile explicated, grown accustomed to ruling in the worldly realm, and was reluctant to retreat from its interim position of being the worldly ruler in the temporary absence of government. This still left the argument that the missionaries were encroaching on colonial rule, 'prejudicing civil administration'. Theile minimised this unavoidable conclusion by emphasising that Pilhofer's 'fanaticism' was about 'native village councils', and the mission's aspiration to rule was restricted to a small area—'that district and its hinterland'.<sup>16</sup> The Administrator allowed Theile to save face by conceding that a degree of regional autonomy was desired by the Administration, but control at the local level remained an issue still to be resolved. Theile, referring to their discussion in Rabaul, replied graciously:

I am highly pleased to note that the Administration aims at placing the lower judiciary into the hands of the natives. I recognise that it will be a slow process. Only in a few isolated regions would the natives be ripe and ready for such a step.<sup>17</sup>

The compromise was complete. Theile withdrew all but a few minor allegations against the Administration. The Administrator accepted Theile's explanations. And both agreed that Pilhofer was 'jealous' and a 'fanatic', while New Guineans were relegated to the waiting room of history, where they had to sit patiently until such time when they would be 'ripe and ready'.<sup>18</sup>

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15 Richter also promised that should the government or the Administration demand a declaration of loyalty from the missionaries, "they will be instructed by us to do so". 26.3.1921 Rev F Richter to The Hon. WM Hughes, NAA, A518, C838/1 Pt 1.

16 See 15.12.1930 Memorandum by Wisdom, Administrator, for The Secretary, Prime Minister's Department and 29.1.1931 Theile to His Honour The Administrator, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1.

17 29.1.1931 Theile to His Honour The Administrator, NAA, A518, AB838/1 PART 1.

18 The argument that self-determination or independence, or any sort of political power was to be given to 'natives' as 'soon' as they were ready, is a colonial trope. Dipesh Chakrabarty called it 'the waiting room of history'. See Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *Provincialising Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000, chapter one. See also Amit Chaudhuri, 'In the Waiting-Room of History', *London Review of Books* Vol. 26, No. 12, 24.6.2004 (online edition).

Theile's warning to Eppelein in 1932 not to get into opposition to the Administration was deeply influenced by his past dealings with the Australian government, and particularly by his encounter with Administrator Wisdom. But added to this was his general sense of Australian sensitivities—including his own.

Friedrich Otto Theile understood Australian fears of fifth columnists. He and his fellow Lutherans had experienced the hysteria and hostilities directed towards them as potential traitors during WWI. He knew that the Lutheran mission in New Guinea was in an even more vulnerable position, because of its domination by German staff and its privileged and intimate dealings with New Guineans. It therefore had to avoid anything which looked or sounded like disloyalty or unfair criticism of the Administration. Theile was not confident that his German brethren fully appreciated the degree of diplomacy needed. In July 1930 Theile wrote to J J Stolz, his church president in Adelaide, and confided that he sensed that the Germans wanted to drop him as their intermediary. Theile was concerned that such a move would further complicate negotiations with the Australian government:

Sie sind sich freilich nicht klar darueber wie viel auf den Australier [Theile] ankommt bei den Verhandlungen mit der Regierung und Administration. Und weil sie alle Handlungsweisen unserer Regierung als 'Schofel' ansehen, so koennen sie es nicht begreifen. Dass unsere Regierung mit einem Australier verhandeln will, das verletzt das Prestige der Deutschen, ob er in Bayern, oder in Neu Guinea ist.<sup>19</sup>

They, however, do not understand how much depends on an Australian [Theile] for the negotiations with the government and the Administration. And because they regard all actions of our government as 'unfair', they are unable to understand this. That our government prefers to negotiate with an Australian hurts the pride of Germans, whether he is in Bavaria or in New Guinea.

The letter went on to describe how Theile's health had been affected by these tensions. This, as well as the collapse of grammar in the above quote show how deeply upset

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Chaudhuri comments on a central paragraph in Chakrabarty's book: "According to Mill, Indians or Africans were not yet civilised enough to rule themselves. Some historical time of development and civilisation (colonial rule and education, to be precise) had to elapse before they could be considered prepared for such a task. Mill's historicist argument thus consigned Indians, Africans and other 'rude' nations to an imaginary waiting-room of history."

The 'imaginary waiting-room of history' is another of Chakrabarty's compressed, telling images. I don't know if he picked it up from the German playwright Heiner Müller, who uses it of the 'Third World' in a 1989 interview; but he employs it to great effect. The phrase has purgatorial resonances: you feel that those who are in the waiting-room are going to be there for some time. For modernity has already had its authentic incarnation in Europe: how then can it happen again, elsewhere? The non-West - the waiting-room - is therefore doomed either never to be quite modern, to be, in Naipaul's phrase, 'half-made'; or to possess only a semblance of modernity. This is a view of history and modernity that has, according to Chakrabarty, at once liberated, defined and shackled us in its discriminatory universalism; it is a view powerfully theological in its determinism, except that the angels, the blessed and the excluded are real people, real communities.'

19 Theile an JJ Stolz, 15 July 1930, Lutheran Archives Adelaide, UELCA-NG Missions: Correspondence – FO Theile to JJ Stolz 1921-1932.

Theile was. As a 17-year-old Theile had been sent by his church to Germany to study Theology at the seminary in Neuendettelsau. On his return to Australia he had asked to be allowed to become a missionary.<sup>20</sup> His church, however, refused, as it needed trained men for parish duties. The crisis of WWI had allowed Theile a second chance. God called him to mission work, but not into the field as Theile had hoped and dreamt, but behind a desk as an administrator and negotiator. He was not about to let this calling slip. His criticism of German nationalism and pride was accurate and at the same time tainted by his desire to be needed as a go-between. It was also easy for him to disapprove of the Germans for politically and emotionally resenting the Australian Administration, instead of focusing on 'the kingdom of God'. Theile's dealings were, despite tensions, done with what he called in his letter to Stolz 'our government'. Confident that his advice was right and based on an objective assessment, Theile did not realise how much he himself, like his fellow German Lutherans, was caught up in post war nationalism. His nationalism was at times so outspoken, that it even took government departments by surprise. Shortly after the end of the war, the Prime Minister's department wrote in an internal memorandum, that Theile, who was according to their files a traitor and a spy, would consistently voice nationalistic rhetoric: "'we Australians", "Our new possessions", "After it (the war) has ended victoriously for us", etc. etc.'. The department concluded that this was 'brazen effrontery'.<sup>21</sup>

In his acquiescence in Wisdom's assertion that all allegations made by Pilhofer were unsubstantiated, Theile was not only strategically outmanoeuvred by a better political player. He was also somewhat relieved to find that Australian colonial rule was not as bad as Pilhofer had described it. After discussing Pilhofer's accusations with the Administration in 1931 Theile was convinced that overall the Australians were governing well in New Guinea, and that, as he wrote to Eppelein in 1932, 'the legislation ... is well-meaning towards the natives'.<sup>22</sup>

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20 Theile was in Neuendettelsau from 1897 to 1901. Theile described himself in 1919 'as a born Australian, who ever since he entered manhood, that is since 1901, has taken the greatest interest in the natives of my own country and of New Guinea'. (14 May 1919 FO Theile to The Acting Prime Minister, The Hon. AW Watt, NAA, A518, C838/1 Pt. 1). 1901 was the year of Theile's ordination. See Theodor Herbart, p. 312. In 1923 Theile took the risky step of resigning from parish duties to devote himself full-time to the New Guinea Mission.

21 4.5.1920, Internal Memorandum, Prime Minister, NAA, A518, C838/1 Pt 1.

22 13.1.1932 Theile to Boards for Mission of the ALC, UELCA and Neuendettelsau, ND 53-31. Referring directly to his negotiations with Wisdom in 1931 Theile stated some months after his meeting in Rabaul:

Theile's reply to Eppelein's demand for sole control of a separate part of the mission field for Neuendettelsau thus raised some deep and fundamental objections, not only to the demand per se, but especially to the specific suggestion on how to divide the field and the consequences this would have. While the Americans also rejected Eppelein's plans, arguing that they would be left with a mission field unable to expand, a crippled entity, Theile feared a revival of what he saw as Pilhofer's ambition to by-pass the Australian government and create a *Kirchenstaat*, a space in which the mission would rule spiritually and politically. Voicing his concerns to his church president, J J Stolz, Theile lamented:

Dr. Eppelein hat keine Uebersicht und keine Gabe der Organisation. Er verlaesst sich lediglich auf Bruder Pilhofer und der ist Fanatiker.<sup>23</sup>

D[irector] Eppelein has got no overview and no gift for organising. He merely relies on brother Pilhofer, who is a fanatic.

Wilhelm Flierl, who had earlier supported Theile's opposition to a division of the field, disagreed with Theile's analysis and defended Pilhofer, his brother-in-law. The field Neuendettelsau proposed for the ALC would have indeed been cut off from the hinterland, but the Americans had previously given the impression that they were not interested in expanding inland. Rather than this being a malicious plan by Pilhofer, it had been Pilhofer, Flierl argued, who had convinced the Americans of the importance of access to new mission opportunities inland. On the basis of working closely with Pilhofer for three years, Flierl assured Theile with confidence that a Theocracy, *Kirchenstaat*, was not something Pilhofer aspired to create. Rather Pilhofer saw it as his duty to represent New Guineans indefatigably at all relevant government agencies, and influence legislation and administration so that 'the *Volkstum* of the natives would not be totally trampled down by civilisation's influences, but would be saved as much as possible'. Flierl also rejected Theile's accusation that Pilhofer had hidden within Neuendettelsau's plan a solution for the long-standing dispute over language use on the field in favour of Kate. Flierl acknowledged that the perimeters set by the proposed borders would theoretically allow the introduction of Kate as lingua franca, but in practice this could only be done by putting pressure on peoples such as the Azera,

Ich glaube nicht zuviel zu sagen, wenn ich behaupte die Absichten der Administration mit den Eingeborenen sind ehrliche und gute, dass wir nicht in jedem Punkt damit uebereinstimmen koennen, das liegt in der Natur der Sache

I believe it is not to say too much when I contend that the intentions of the Administration in regard to the natives are honest and good; that we cannot agree with every point is due to the nature of the matter.

3.10.1931 Theile to Eppelein, ND 53-31.

<sup>23</sup> 4.1.1932 FO Theile to JJ Stolz, Lutheran Archives Adelaide UELCA-NG Missions, Correspondence FO Theile to JJ Stolz 1921-32.



Laewamba, and Kaidemoe to switch to Kate, which, the leading men in Neuendettelsau would understand, was not feasible.<sup>24</sup>

Theile, however, was not convinced. And he was not the only one who suspected Pilhofer's hand in Neuendettelsau's push for the separation of the field. Friedrich Braun, member of the American Board for Foreign Mission, asserted somewhat bitterly the unwillingness of the American Lutherans to continue to support Neuendettelsau financially after the separation. He wrote at the end of 1932:

Let them paddle their own canoe...who is responsible for the shifting? It was N[euendettelsau], especially famous Rev. Pilhofer.<sup>25</sup>

To blame Pilhofer for Neuendettelsau's push to get sole control of their mission back was somewhat of an exaggeration. Rather Pilhofer took advantage of the German crisis and the resulting negotiations about a division of the field to advance his own agenda of a united 'Papuan' dominated people.

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<sup>24</sup> 29.5.1932 W. Flierl to Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile. For more details on the language debate see the following chapter.

<sup>25</sup> 14.11.1932, F Braun to F.O. Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54-BFM to Theile.

## One God, one language, one nation: Pilhofer's persistence

Ich halte [Pilhofer] fuer den einzigen wirklich weitblickenden Kopf, der nicht bloss an sein spezielles Ressort & an seine Einzelgemeinde denk, sondern das Ganze im Auge hat.

*I regard [Pilhofer] to be the only thinker with true foresight, who not only cares for his special area & his own community, but is focused on the whole.*

Christian Keyßer , 24 April 1928

Pilhofer was furious about Theile's backing down. When Theile spoke to Administrator Wisdom, Pilhofer had already left New Guinea for a rest period in Germany, where news of Theile's change of heart reached him.<sup>26</sup> After reading Theile's report, Pilhofer waited for four weeks before replying. The tone of his letter to Theile was friendly, the content was not. Pilhofer was disappointed that Theile left New Guinea having achieved nothing and conceded everything in his negotiations with the Administrator. Pilhofer was at a loss to understand Theile's actions:

Jedenfalls bist Du nach Neuguinea mit dem Vorsatz gekommen, energisch zu handeln und diesen Vorsatz hattest Du wohl auch noch in unserer Sitzung, die in meinem Studierzimmer stattfand und bei der ich Dir die Punkte nannte, über die mit der Regierung zu verhandeln sei.<sup>27</sup>

At any rate you came to New Guinea with the intention to act forcefully, and you surely still had this intention during our meeting, which happened in my study, and during which I told you the issues to be negotiated with the government.

Pilhofer told Theile that it did not concern him whether he himself received support or not. But he cared whether 'our helpers'<sup>28</sup> were protected by the people in charge of the mission against chicanery and harassment. While the previous superintendent, Senior Flierl, Pilhofer claimed, had always stood up for New Guineans, the present superintendent, Stefan Lehner, was better at arbitration than at acting decisively. So far Theile had complemented Lehner, as he had negotiated with the government skillfully and fearlessly. But, Pilhofer said, Theile's recent shift had shaken Pilhofer's trust in him. Pilhofer conceded that some details New Guineans provided might not have been completely accurate, but the fact still remained that core policies and practices of the Administration had to be opposed by the mission, such as taxation, jurisdiction, and the attitudes of the Administration towards indigenous evangelists (helpers), education and indigenous customs, especially polygamy:

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<sup>26</sup> Pilhofer mentioned that before Theile's report arrived, he had already been informed through a number of letters by other missionaries. 1.7.1931 Pilhofer to Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

<sup>27</sup> 1.7.1931 Pilhofer to Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

<sup>28</sup> 'Helper' referred to New Guinean mission workers, and was later replaced by the term evangelists.

<p>Das haben Dir doch auch andere Männer bezeugt, daß die Angaben, die ich ... an Dich gemacht hatte, richtig seien, Männer wie Cox, Silento, Burton.<sup>29</sup></p>	<p>That the information I gave you was accurate had also been attested to you by other men, such as Cox, Silento (sic), Burton.<sup>30</sup></p>
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Pilhofer gave Theile an ultimatum. During his holidays Pilhofer would let the matter rest. But if Theile had not changed his policies and approach when Pilhofer returned to New Guinea, Pilhofer would resign from the field's leadership team, and consider making his information public. He warned:

<p>Ich habe reiches einschlägiges Material, dessen Veröffentlichung sowohl hier wie in Australien einen Sturz hervorrufen würde.</p>	<p>I have rich and pertinent material, the publication of which would bring down somebody here as well as in Australia.</p>
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Pilhofer's complaints were for him not just about some government policies or practices not working properly. Pilhofer had a vision of New Guinea becoming one nation (Volk), and he tried to make both the Lutheran mission and the Administration work towards his goal.

Amongst the many issues closely related to this vision was the idea of an indigenous lingua franca, and it is here, analysing Pilhofer's language policies, that ideological foundations and political implications of his united 'Papuan' *Volks*-church (papuanische Volkskirche) emerge.<sup>31</sup>

The use of indigenous languages by the Neuendettelsauer Mission and the development of two main church languages were complex processes, accompanied by extensive theoretical, religious and practical debates and reflections by many missionaries.<sup>32</sup>

29 1.7.1931 Pilhofer to Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

30 Theile himself wrote to Eppelein, that Reverend Cox, in charge of the Methodist mission in Rabaul, who 'like no other stands up for the natives fearlessly and decisively', had strongly agreed with Theile's letter to the Administrator. See 3.10.1931 Theile to Eppelein, ND 25/31. William Henry Cox and Dr John Wear Burton (1875-1970) were both members of the Methodist Mission. Cox had been Chairman of the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia since 1912; Burton became President-General of the Methodist Church of Australasia in 1945. See for example John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea*, pp. 50-51. Sir Raphael West Cilento, (1893-1985), was a physician, lawyer and public servant. From 1928 to 1933 he was Director of the Division of Tropical Hygiene and Chief Quarantine Officer, North East Division of Australia. See Fedora Gould Fisher, *Raphael Cilento, a Biography*, University of Queensland Press, 1994; Bright Sparcs, Biographical entry 'Cilento, Raphael West', <http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/bsparcs/biogs/>.

31 The following section cannot exhaust the complexity of the issues debated, nor the reservations by and implications for various New Guinean people and peoples, who were involved in this debate at the time and in the end had to live with the consequences of the implementation of language policies.

32 For discussions during the main conferences see for example UELCA-NG: LMF 55/20 Manuscripts & Papers, and ND 55/10 Manuscripts and papers: Conference Papers. See also Fontius, especially pp. 39, 118-122; 137-142; and Pilhofer, *die Geschichte der Neuendettelsauer Mission*, Vol. 2; The introduction of the Keyßer method complicated matters further, because New Guinean villages were to be involved in the actual spreading of the gospel; the resulting practical issues of training and sending of indigenous

While the Neuendettelsauer Mission theoretically aimed at bringing the gospel to all peoples in their own language, the training of indigenous teachers and evangelists (helpers) in a multitude of languages was impracticable. Training was therefore undertaken at two schools, one of which used the Papuan language Kate for teaching, the other the Melanesian or Austronesian language Jabim. Throughout the 1920s it was debated whether and how to accelerate and utilise the spreading of these two languages. Should they become church internal languages for worship and teaching, like Latin had been in Medieval Europe? Or should they replace other local languages completely?<sup>33</sup> Would publications be limited to these two languages? Should the gospel be brought initially in a tribe's local language, and Kate or Jabim be introduced at a later stage, or should they be the missionising languages from the start? And if the mission later replaced 'language-splinters' with a language shared by more and more tribes, should it limit itself to one lingua franca throughout its mission field, should it keep spreading both Jabim and Kate, or should it even add another language, such as Azera?

Accelerating the urgency and passion of these debates was the introduction of Christianity into the populous Markham Valley, where the main language spoken was Azera, and the related problem of which language to use to bring the gospel into the Bismarck and Kratke ranges. Also, the Lutherans were just making contact with the numerous peoples of the Eastern Highlands, speakers of non-Austronesian languages. The Highlands languages belonged to a different stock from Kate, which supported arguments that there was a case for a third mission lingua franca.<sup>34</sup> In 1926 differences of opinion erupted in intense debates during the white missionaries' annual meeting, called 'the main conference' (*Hauptkonferenz*), without coming to a final compromise or solution. The main conferences of the following years continued to debate what was called 'die Sprachenfrage', the 'language problem'. Before the Brisbane negotiations the debate gathered momentum during the main conference in early 1929 as the two proponents of the main lingua franca models presented their views and politics in lengthy talks.

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'helpers', led to a conflict with the other main credo, that the gospel should be brought in a people's own language. The decision to use indigenous evangelists and teachers was done for both theological and practical reasons. See for example Fontius, p. 138f.

<sup>33</sup> The terms used were *Schulsprache*, *Kirchensprache* and *Volkssprache*.

<sup>34</sup> For further details see R. Radford, *Highlanders and Foreigners in the Upper Ramu. The Kainantu Area 1919-1942*, MUP Melbourne 1987.

Heinrich Zahn, who had been working amongst Jabem speakers since 1902 and was a gifted musicologist and linguist,<sup>35</sup> gave the main address entitled ‘The Problem of Kate as lingua franca’.<sup>36</sup> The heated debates about language policies, Zahn complained, had spilled out from the main conference into other places, and were causing disquiet, especially amongst Jabem-speaking helpers and congregations. Rumours were circulating, and it seemed likely that Jabem congregations were contemplating joining the Catholics rather than be deprived of their language. The pupils at the Jabem evangelist school in Heldsbach had rejected a recent proposal to switch to Kate, arguing that the story of the tower of Babel showed that having one language only was against God’s wishes. Zahn, who had gained the consent of all white Jabem missionaries before the main conference to act as their spokesperson, did not object in principle to the idea of a lingua franca. But for the sake of the unity of the mission and further peaceful development it was necessary to keep Jabem alongside Kate. The bi-lingual policy which had worked well so far would also work well in the future.

Georg Pilhofer disagreed. For him the only viable option for a lingua franca was the Kate language, which he had tried to push into a strategically favourable position from as early as 1913.<sup>37</sup> In response to Zahn’s paper Pilhofer re-iterated some of his central ideas he had been voicing during previous main conferences, and now he developed his arguments further. New explorations had shown, Pilhofer asserted, that the numbers of Melanesian speakers were lower than previously thought, and that they were geographically separated and would never be able to form one unified region. The Papuan tribes in contrast were much more numerous:

<p>Menschlich gesprochen gehoert die Zukunft von N. Guinea den papuanischen Staemmen, nicht nur weil sie in der ueberzahl sind, sondern auch, weil sie die</p>	<p>Spoken from the perspective of human beings the future of N. Guinea belongs to the Papuan tribes, not only because they are the majority, but also</p>
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<sup>35</sup> Heinrich Zahn (1880-1944) was 49 years old then.

<sup>36</sup> Heinrich Zahn, *Das Problem des Kate als Einheitssprache. Der erste Versuch der Einfuehrung in Azera und das Ergebnis*. ND 55/10.

<sup>37</sup> When Pilhofer developed his ideas, and with them the centrality of Kate, is not quite clear. Some strategic actions he took, however, suggest that they were already being formed before WWI and the occupation of New Guinea by Australia. In 1913 and 1914 Pilhofer managed to have the evangelist’s school he was in charge of relocated twice, first from Simbang, which was situated in a borderland between Jabim and Kate speaking peoples, to Zaka, and from there to Heldsbach, further into Kate-speaking heartland. See Fontius p. 139. Discussing Pilhofer’s own account of the events, Fontius observes that Pilhofer sets out no reason in the second volume of his history (p. 46), while the arguments he recalls in the first volume (p. 165) are ‘not quite plausible’. Fontius thus places the relocation of the school initiated by Pilhofer within a distinct ‘church-linguistic strategy with missionising aim’ (eine eigene kirchensprachliche Strategie mit missionarischer Spitze) Fontius pp. 138-139. While I would agree with Fontius’ analysis and observations, it seems to me that Pilhofer’s vision was wider and more political than Fontius suggests.

lebenskraeftigeren sind.<sup>38</sup>

| because they are more 'vital'.

Pilhofer took from a German linguist, Professor Otto Dempwolff, several ideas about biological characteristics of Melanesians and the origins of the Austronesian languages they spoke, and turned a hypothesis about biological and linguistic origins into an argument for language policies to create a better chance for 'survival' for the Papuan and Melanesian peoples of New Guinea.

Dempwolff (1871-1939) was a medical doctor and leading German expert on indigenous languages, who from the turn of the century to the beginning of WWI had undertaken medical research in New Guinea several times. He lectured at the University in Hamburg, and headed the *Seminar für Indonesische und Südsee-Sprachen*, to which Neuendettelsauer sent selected Seminarists for linguistic training. Dempwolff had developed a theory about the origins of Melanesian, or Austronesian languages in New Guinea.<sup>39</sup> Because of 'linguistic considerations', Dempwolff wrote, it had to be concluded that the languages spoken by Melanesians and Polynesians originally belonged to 'the language resources of a united nation'. The 'racial differences of the dark, curly-haired Melanesians and the fair, smooth-haired Polynesians', however, posed a problem, a 'paradox'. They were racially so different, that biological connections seemed impossible. Referring to the German physician Dr. Kurt Danneil, Dempwolff developed a hypothesis based on a medical observation. Islands inhabited by Polynesians were free from malaria, and Polynesians 'did not have the hardiness against that pestilence as the Melanese had'. Dempwolff concluded that therefore the most likely explanation for the difference in appearance but closeness in language between Polynesians and Melanesians was the following:

Eine hellfarbiger Volksstamm von einheitlicher Sprache hat vor vielen Generationen die Inselwelt des Stillen Ozeans kolonisiert. Wo er eine dunkel-farbige Bevölkerung antraf, hat er sie mit seiner Kulture und Sprache beeinflusst und auch von ihrer Kultur und Sprache vieles aufgenommen. Soweit auf jenen Inseln Malaria und andere Seuchen

A fair race with a homogeneous language had colonized the islands in the Pacific Ocean many generations ago. Whenever these people found dark-coloured inhabitants, they influenced them with their culture and language, and conversely they accepted from them culture and language. As far as Malaria and other epidemics: in whatever islands

38 January 1929 Georg Pilhofer, Koreferat 'Das Problem des Kate als Einheitssprache', ND 55/10. All following quotes are, if not otherwise indicated, from this paper.

39 The German is quoted from Otto Dempwolff, *Vergleichende Lautlehre des Austronesischen Wortschatzes*, Vol. II, Berlin 1937, reprint Nemdeln, Lichtenstein 1969, pp. 193f; the English translation is taken from Otto Dempwolff, *Comparative Phonology of the Austronesian Word Lists*, Vol II, Berlin and Hamburg 1937, pp. 341f. I would like to thank Andrew Pawley for pointing me to these sections in Dempwolff's work. For a recent debate about Anthropological and linguistic models see for example J.E.Terrell, K. Kelly and P. Rainbird, 'Forgone Conclusions? In search of "Papuan" and "Austronesians"', *Current Anthropology* Vol. 42, No. 1, February 2001, pp. 97-124.

herrschen, ist seine Rasse untergegangen, hat seine Kultur und Sprache aber deutliche Reste hinterlassen.	these were found the race became extinct, <sup>40</sup> but left clear remnants of its culture and language.
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In short, through culture contact Melanesians in New Guinea had inherited Austronesian languages, which were not from the same group of Non-Austronesian languages their biological forefathers and foremothers had spoken.

Referring to Dempwolff, Pilhofer explained to his fellow missionaries that the Melanesians were a mixed race with 80-90% Papuan blood in their veins, and thus constituted a '*Splitter*', a fragment, from the Papuan '*Volkskoerper*', literally 'people's body'. Their language was a mixed language with Papuan components, which existed unconnected alongside Polynesian language elements, the latter being of a 'foreign type'. It was thus Kate, and not Jabem, which should be brought to the Azera, inland natives of predominantly Papuan blood, as Jabem would introduce foreign elements and never reach the inner depth of the people. Going one step further and discontinuing Jabem and using only Kate throughout the mission would be best, and would have additional practical benefits such as the simplification of literature publication and schooling. But wider issues were at stake:

Sie [die Sprachenfrage] ist ja nicht nur eine Frage unserer Mission, sondern der ganzen Kolonie. Die Regierung lehnt Pidgin als Einheitssprache ab und sie wuerde eine Eingeborensprache an ihre Stelle setzten, wenn eine solche mit weiter Verbreitung vorhanden waere. Es ist deshalb sehr wahrscheinlich, dass diejenige Mission die die Sprachenfrage innerhalb eines groesseren Gebietes am schnellsten und gruendlichsten loest, zugleich die Sprachenfrage der ganzen Kolonie entscheidet.

It [the language question] is not only a problem of our mission, but of the whole colony. The government rejects Pidgin<sup>41</sup> as a lingua franca and would put an indigenous language in its place, if there was one with a wide spread. It is therefore highly likely that the mission which solves the language problem within a bigger area quickest and most thoroughly, will decide at the same time the language problem of the whole colony.

Pursuing two lingua francas would not only disadvantage the mission within the colony, but would let the natives down, who were all more or less Papuan by blood, and some of whom had only by accident of history acquired Austronesian languages instead of their original Papuan tongues:

40 The German word 'untergehen' is a more ambivalent word than 'becoming extinct'. It literally means 'going down', and can mean fading away, being doomed. *Untergang* is the word used by Spengler in his famous book *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, the rise and fall of the Occident; *untergehen* is also used for example for ships sinking.

41 Pidgin was becoming more and more used by the Divine Word Catholics culminating in the Catholics doing significant translations and dictionary work on Pidgin. See 'Foreword' to Rev Francis Mihalic, *Grammar and Dictionary*, Neo. Melanesian Mission Press Madang, 1957, pp. VII-X. Interestingly, in the neighboring Territory of Papua the government used Police Motu as a lingua franca. Motu was a Melanesian or Austronesian language. So largely by default the Territory of Papua lingua franca was derived from what Dempwolff thought was a language adopted by non-Austronesians while in contact with Austronesians.

Aber dass wir durch die Ausbreitung von zwei Sprachen zwei Kirchen und zwei Voelker schaffen, dieser Gedanke ist mir so furchtbar, dass ich innerlich nicht darueber hinwegkomme. Wir spalten diese an sich einheitlichen Menschen in zwei grosse Gruppen auf, tragen einen Gegensatz in sie hinein, der ihnen von Natur fremd ist, und untergraben ihre Zukunft. Unsere Eingebornen bilden eine Schicksalsgemeinschaft... Ob unsere Eingebornen sich werden behaupten und den Existenzkampf, der ihnen ebensowenig erspart bleibt wie den afrikanischen oder asia-tischen Voelkern, werden siegreich fuehren koennen, haengt von der Frage nach ihrer Einheit ab.

But that by spreading two languages we create two churches and two peoples is so terrible for me that internally I cannot get over it. We split these inherently uniform [unitary] human beings into two groups, and introduce a polarity, which is alien to them by nature, and undermines their future. Our natives form a community based on fate. ... Whether our natives will stand their ground, and will lead a successful war for their existence, which like that of the African and Asiatic peoples will also not be spared them, depends on the question of their unity.

As two groups, Pilhofer dramatically concluded, they would remain 'bond-slaves, serfs, of the master-race', and ultimately perish. Blending contemporary ideas of the rise and fall of peoples<sup>42</sup> with religious eschatological ideas that had been permeating Lutheranism since its foundations,<sup>43</sup> Pilhofer thus set the question of unity of the mission field within the wider context of a worldwide crisis:

Durch die ganze Mission und Kirche geht ein grosser Zug nach Vereinigung. Er ist sicher von dem gewirkt, der in seiner letzten Stunde gebetet hat: 'Gib, dass sie alle eins seien!' Denn Gott trennt nicht, sondern er eint. Alle Trennung kommt von dem, der nicht will, dass Gottes Reich gebaut werde. Der Herr aber will jetzt die Seinen zusammenfuehren, damit sie in der bevorstehenden Weltkrise geschlossen Stand halten koennen.

A great pull towards unification goes through the whole mission and church. It is surely affected by him, who in his last hour prayed: 'Give, that they all be one!'<sup>44</sup> For God does not separate, but unite. All separation comes from that one, who does not want God's Kingdom to be built. The Lord, however, wants to bring together those who are his now, so that they may jointly hold fast in the imminent world-crisis.

The question, whether the unity of Christianity as a whole, which Pilhofer's apocalyptic vision implied, was really best served with limiting New Guineans to a local language that no other Christian community in the world shared, was outside of this logic. The idea that humanity consisted of peoples as fundamental units was so deeply believed that no universal concept could contradict it. Rather the idea of cultural and racial difference was incorporated into the idea of Christianity as a subdivided unity. This idea was shared not only by members of the Neuendettelsauer mission, such as Epplein and Christian Keyßer, but by many German Lutheran theologians at the time. Frequently the

42 The idea of decline and crisis fuelled many strands of philosophy, art, literature, music, and so on. It was a Zeitgeist shared by the Western World. See for example Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, in English *The Decline Of The West*, which was published in two volumes 1918 and 1922.

43 The Dutch historian Heiko A. Oberman has argued that Luther's theology was based on eschatological foundations, a belief shared by contemporaries that the last day was near. This had deep ramifications for the development of Luther's thinking, and Lutheran theology. See for example Oberman, Heiko A., *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus. Christenangst und Judenplage im Zeitalter von Humanismus und Reformation*, Berlin 1981, (in English translated by James I. Porter, *The roots of anti-Semitism in the age of Renaissance and Reformation*, Philadelphia 1984); and Oberman, Heiko A., *Luther: Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel*, Berlin 1981 (in English translated by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart, *Luther: man between God and the Devil*, New Haven 1989).

44 Pilhofer paraphrased John, 17, 21.



*Freimund* reiterated the importance of the category of 'peoples' for mission work at home and abroad. The central biblical text quoted was from the final verses of the gospel of Matthew (Matthew 28, 16-20) called 'the great commission' within English tradition, and 'der Missionsbefehl', literally 'the instruction to missionise', in German religious tradition: 'Machet zu Jüngern alle Völker', 'turn all peoples into disciples'.<sup>45</sup> Time and time again this verse was used to explain that it was to peoples Christianity was to be brought, not just to individuals, and that becoming a united people was part of building God's kingdom.<sup>46</sup>

The boundary for linguistic, cultural, social and political unity was pre-existing *Volkstum*. Christianity would have to be lived in religious communities within these boundaries.<sup>47</sup> Christian Keyßer's acclaimed mission-theory had at its centre the idea of bringing Christianity to tribes, instead of to individuals. Keyßer tried to think out how Christianity could be introduced without extinguishing the unity of an existing group. Pilhofer in turn tried to deal with the problem of how Christianity could be spread to diverse groups, without losing the unity of the religious and the socio-political, which lay at the heart of Keyßer's ideas of Christian tribes and communities. Both Holsten and Hoekendijk have shown that not only the idea of preserving ethnic units, but also the 'making of a people' was intrinsic to Keyßer's theory.<sup>48</sup> Underlying Keyßer's ideas, which Pilhofer shared, were concepts of *Volkstum* and *Volksseele*:

Bei allen Völkern findet sich diese Volksseele, darum ist auch überall Volkstum vorhanden. Freilich ist es oft schwer wahrzunehmen, wenn die äussere Volkseinheit fehlt, wie z.B. bei den mancherlei Volkssplittern kulturarmer Stämme ... Aber die Geschichte zeigt, daß die Volksseele doch da ist, wenn auch verschüttet, schlafend oder sogar tot. Aber sie kann erwachen. ...<sup>49</sup>

All People have this Volks-soul, and thus Volkstum exists everywhere. Often it is, of course, difficult to perceive, when the outer Volks-unity is lacking, like for example with various Volks-fragments of culturally poor tribes... But history shows that the Volks-soul is still there even if buried, dormant, or even dead. But it can awake...

For Pilhofer this pre-existing Volks-soul was tied to Papuan 'blood', and it was thus only through a Papuan language that New Guineans could come to an actual, lived unity which was always inherently theirs.

<sup>45</sup> The Greek word *gens* was translated by Luther as *Voelker*, peoples. The specific interpretation Neuendettelsau gave this verse is rather lost in the King James Bible translation of Verse 19: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...'

<sup>46</sup> This idea was not confined to Neuendettelsau but part of wider ideological-theological thought. See for example Hoekendijk, *Kirche und Volkstum*; Klaus Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*, especially pp. 93-109 and 124-150; also Ustorf, pp. 30f.

<sup>47</sup> It is impossible to give a thorough analysis in the context of this thesis. The idea of 'inculturation' of the gospel is part of this ideology. See for example Epplein, in *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 51. Ustorf points out that the German mission desire to bring the gospel to 'local soil' has led to a revival of interest in their writing by people interested in today's notion of inculturation. See Ustorf, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> See Holsten pp. 135f and Hoekendijk.

<sup>49</sup> Keysser, 'Die voelkische Frage in Lichte der Heidenmission', *Freimund* 30.7.1931 (No.31) p. 234.

The much-used term ‘*Splitter*’, splinter or fragment, to describe the multitude of tribes and languages in New Guinea, implied both a pre-existing unity as well as the task of putting these fragments together again. The ultimate aim for Pilhofer was to build up linguistic, religious, cultural, social and political unity amongst New Guineans, so that in the end the boundaries of the (Lutheran) church coincided with the boundaries of a united people (*Volk*) and nation of New Guinea. Pilhofer called this ‘*eine vereinigte Papuanische Volkskirche*’, a ‘united Papuan *Volks*-church’.

The decision the main conference reached in 1929 was a compromise which fell short of Pilhofer’s final aim, but brought him one step closer. Solving the problem of a lingua franca for the whole mission field was postponed, but Kate would forthwith be introduced into the Markham Valley.

Pilhofer took the main conference’s decision as a vote of confidence. Throughout the Brisbane negotiations, which he attended as Neuendettelsau’s sole representative of the mission field, he tried to remind the delegates to keep focused on the aim of a united ‘Papuan’ church, and make no decision which would put its future in jeopardy.

Christian Keyßer, who followed the development of the Brisbane negotiations from Germany, supported Pilhofer’s concerns. After receiving the protocol detailing the agreement, he set out a critical response, which he sent to all parties involved:

Die Freude über das Ergebnis (sic) der Verhandlungen in Brisbane wird gedämpft durch die nicht geringe Sorge, ob man dort wirklich die Rücksicht auf das Missionsfeld allen anderen Rücksichten vorangestellt hat.<sup>50</sup>

The joy about the result of the negotiations in Brisbane is dampened by the worry, which is not slight, whether one has really put considerations about the mission field ahead of all other considerations there.

Keyßer warned that the introduction of German- and American-controlled spheres of interest as well as the return of the Madang area to Barmen had the potential to disrupt the development of a unified ‘*Volks*’-church in New Guinea. To counter these dangers Keyßer suggested that one superintendent be in charge of the whole mission field, that all white mission staff meet annually at a joint conference, and that representatives of all congregations came together bi-annually. All efforts, he said, should be directed to move inland and set up Lutheran missions before the Catholics got there.

<sup>50</sup> 15.7.1929, Christian Keyßer, Etliche Bemerkungen, Fragen und Bedenken, (typed copy), ALC NG, LMF 55/20, 7 pages, quote p. 1.

Keyßer took it as a given that in a little while one language should and would be used as a lingua franca throughout the whole mission field, and added some thoughts and deliberations in order to assist his fellow Lutherans in deciding whether Jabem or Kate would be more appropriate. Keyßer's arguments focused on the number of speakers of the language, the quality of their culture and character, including resistance to sin and initiative for leadership, the geographical unity and vital statistics of the respective people. Did Melanesians or Papuans, asked Keyßer, have the healthier population, lower mortality rates, greater numbers of births and better balance between numbers of women and men? Which group was more in danger of proletarianisation? While Keyßer emphasised that these questions could not be answered from distant Germany, the gist of his questions suggested Kate, the language of his old mission area, as more suitable. Some linguists, Keyßer declared, thought Kate to be more 'malleable' (*plastisch*) and formable (*bildsam*), and thus more suitable to become a *Kultursprache*, a 'civilised' language of culture, than Jabem. It was still possible, Keyßer warned, that both Melanesians and Papuans were doomed, only one earlier, the other later. In order to have at least a chance to endure the language chosen by the mission as lingua franca must thus have the ability to become *Kultursprache*.

The language of eugenics and racial degeneracy was pervasive at the time, and ideas about how to regenerate and revitalise a race, or shelter it from culture clash and the destructive influences of modernity were entangled in Keyßer's arguments with his personal experiences in New Guinea. While he admonished his fellow missionaries to put personal matters and pride aside, the Kate language was deeply linked to Keyßer's status and success as a mission theoretician. It was, after all, the Sattleberg congregation in the Kate speaking district that had provided the model for the Keyßer-mission-method.

Eppelein was far more ambivalent. While he supported the idea of a local *Volks*-church and was pleased with Pilhofer's politics in general, he was less certain in regard to the language problem. Visiting New Guinea allowed him to listen to different opinions and ideas and made him slowly move away from the solutions Pilhofer and Keyßer proposed.

After the Brisbane negotiations the delegates from abroad travelled to New Guinea to visit their respective mission staffs. Pilhofer accompanied Eppelein and Schuster to the

field and throughout much of their journey. He translated Eppelein's first address to an indigenous congregation. During a church service at Heldsbach Eppelein explained the outcome of the Brisbane negotiations, encouraging his listeners to obey the Australian authorities, as it was God's will that 'German Christians in New Guinea are to act now no longer politically, but only as missionaries'. He said that the German missionaries with the assistance of American and Australian Lutherans would continue to support the indigenous Christians of New Guinea to spread the gospel, until all clans and tribes of New Guinea were incorporated into one 'Lutheran Papuan *Volks-church*'.<sup>51</sup> Eppelein was moved to see the eager participation of indigenous Christians during the service and following debate—even breastfeeding mothers rose to speak—and to hear assurances of ongoing gratitude and loyalty. The local people had tolerated the change in colonial government, Eppelein was told, without resistance or violence, because they were Christians. But they had not forgotten the Germans, and were overjoyed that the Germans could continue to work there, and that two teachers from Germany had come to visit.<sup>52</sup>

Representatives of another Kate congregation at Wareo inquired not only how missionaries Keyßer, Pfalzer and Zwanzger were, but also how the German Kaiser fared. They asked Eppelein why the Kaiser was in the Netherlands, and assured him that 'the natives of New Guinea had had no objections to Kaiser Wilhelm II'. It had been wrong that the Germans had dismissed the Kaiser and thus had broken the oaths they had sworn him. Eppelein struggled to answer this 'embarrassing question'. The dismissal of the Kaiser, he said, was not Neuendettelsau's fault, but the doing of people in Berlin, who had been promised a 'better peace' in return. This, however, had turned out to be a bogus promise. The spokesperson of the group showed 'tender sensitivity' and declared that no more questions about Germany would be put to Eppelein, as this obviously caused him great pain and sadness.<sup>53</sup>

Throughout the Kate district, Eppelein remarked, the responses were similar. Germany was praised, and many times the German black-white-red flag was raised.<sup>54</sup> The Jabem

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51 The service took place at Heldsbach on 16 June 1929. Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 118.

52 Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 117.

53 Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 141, visit Wareo (30.6.1929). It is interesting that the New Guinean man, according to Eppelein's recollections, saw Germany's change of political system as an act of disloyalty. Germans had, after all, pledged allegiance to the Kaiser. In how far did this man, and other New Guineans, understand demands placed on them to be loyal to Australia as an order to be disloyal, and break oaths they had previously given?

54 Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 214; see also p. 276.

congregations, in contrast, had a very different political outlook. Eppelein somewhat disapprovingly observed:

In den Jabem-Schulen hingen Bildnisse vom englischen König & der englischen Königin, zwischen beiden - z.B. in Lae - ein Bild vom Herrn 'Christus mit dem sinkenden Petrus'.<sup>55</sup>

In the Jabem schools pictures were hung of the British king & the British queen, and between them - for example in Lae - a picture of the Lord 'Christ with the sinking Peter'.

Eppelein tried to keep politics and mission business apart, and repeatedly pointed out to congregations that the mission was not political, that the Australian authorities should be obeyed, and that acts of disloyalty could have negative consequences for the mission. Yet those New Guineans he spoke to easily recognized his deep-seated patriotism mingled with grief and sadness over Germany's present state of affairs. In the face of Australian colonial rule Eppelein's patriotism turned defiant. On 12 August 1929 the Administrator of New Guinea, General Wisdom, came to Finschhafen for an annual visit. Neither Eppelein nor Schuster were keen to be part of the reception committee. Eppelein explained that not being able to speak English was only part of their reasoning:

Wollten wir nicht charakterlos und hündisch dem Vertreter eines Volkes huldigen, das dem deutschen Volk seine Kolonien einfach geraubt hatte.<sup>56</sup>

[We did not] want characterlessly and cringingly to render homage to the representative of a nation, which had simply robbed the German people of its colonies.

In the end Eppelein and Schuster decided on a compromise. For the sake of the mission they would attend some events, such as a shared breakfast, but stay away from others.

The political differences between Jabem and Kate congregations surprised Eppelein, and he came to the conclusion that they reflected 'different missionary personalities'. Yet while his political sympathies were with the Kate congregations and their missionaries, his heart went out to the Jabem missionaries. Speaking to Heinrich Zahn, Stefan Lehner, and several others, Eppelein learned about the bitterness and pain Karl Steck's visit to New Guinea one and a half decades earlier had been causing. All missionaries working in Jabem-speaking areas apart from one, Eppelein noted, still deeply resented being denigrated and humiliated by Steck, who singled out Christian Keyßer's mission method and the Kate congregation at Sattleberg as exemplars of good mission practice at the expense of everybody else's work.<sup>57</sup> The political shift of some of these missionaries, including that of the old senior and founder of the mission, Johan

<sup>55</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 214.

<sup>56</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 209.

<sup>57</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 214.

Flierl, Eppelein concluded, was part of a reorientation away from a Neuendettelsau dominated by Steck and towards the Australian and American Lutheran churches and their traditions:

Missionssenioren Johannes Flierl ... war offenbar auch durch Stecks rigoroses und unrechtes Auftreten zu einer starken Anlehnung und Bevorzugung Amerikas und Australiens gebracht worden, die er jetzt als alter Mann nicht mehr ganz aufgeben konnte.<sup>58</sup>

By Steck's rigorous and unjust stance mission senior Johannes Flierl ... was apparently, too, persuaded also to lean heavily towards and prefer America and Australia, [an attitude] which now as an old man he was could not quite abandon.

Eppelein had had a strong dislike of Steck as a person and of his ideas ever since he joined the Neuendettelsauer mission in 1926, and had witnessed the tensions between the then mission director Rudolf Ruf and Steck escalate. In the process Eppelein also had become a target for Steck's criticism and this aided Eppelein's identification with the Jabem missionaries' resentment and bitterness. He thus gave Heinrich Zahn's arguments for keeping Jabem as a missionising language a very sympathetic hearing,<sup>59</sup> and resolved to heal the divide that Steck had created, or at least not to widen the rift between the Jabem and Kate missionaries. Listening to the missionaries' opinion on Steck he also wondered: 'How will the missionaries eventually remember me?'<sup>60</sup> There, in New Guinea, Eppelein stepped out of the shadow of Christian Keyßer and his expertise,<sup>61</sup> and decided to give Neuendettelsau and its mission work a direction which reflected his own aims, not only at home, but also on the field: to bridge the divides, heal the rifts and create unity:

Das durch Parteizwistigkeit zerrissene Gemeinschaftsleben der Missionare bereitete mir die größte Sorge für die Gegenwart und Zukunft unseres Missionsfeldes.<sup>62</sup>

The disruption of the missionaries' life of confraternity by factional disputes caused me the greatest concern for the present and the future of our mission field.

Jabem was not discontinued as a missionising language, and the Jabem evangelist school continued alongside the Kate school. Eppelein's refusal to use the reorganisation of the field in the wake of the Brisbane negotiations to make Kate the sole lingua franca, at least in the German sphere of interest, did not, however, stop the debates about language, nor Pilhofer's determination to bring Kate into a dominant position.

<sup>58</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 131.

<sup>59</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 214.

<sup>60</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 235.

<sup>61</sup> See Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, pp. 217f.

<sup>62</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 218.

## Being True to Germany

Eppelein and Schuster left New Guinea in January 1930 to travel home via Australia and Palestine. The following April missionary Stephan Lehner was appointed superintendent to replace Johan Flierl, who left with his wife for retirement in Australia.<sup>63</sup>

Replacing the mission's founder at a time when all structures were in flux after the Brisbane negotiations had not been an easy task, and deliberations had been intense. In December 1929, shortly before Eppelein's departure, mission inspector Wilhelm Koller had even cabled Eppelein from Neuendettelsau, offering to come to New Guinea for five years and fill the position as superintendent. Koller, however, did not understand Neuendettelsau's limitations in making the decision. In accordance with the Brisbane agreements the superintendent was to be in charge of the united Finschhafen mission field, supported by two vice-superintendents—one for the developing American sphere of interest, and one for the mission sphere of Neuendettelsau. The superintendent could thus only be appointed with the consent of all three partners. Eppelein explained to Koller that he had to turn his offer down:

So wie die Dinge sich inzwischen entwickelt haben, ist aber dieser Plan undurchführbar; Amerika & Australien würden nicht zustimmen, auch das Missionsfeld nicht. Die politische Ohnmacht Deutschlands macht solche Schritte unmöglich.<sup>64</sup>

The way things have developed here in the meantime, this plan is unfeasible; America and Australia would not consent, and neither would the mission field. Germany's political powerlessness makes such steps impossible.

The need to compromise and reconcile also made the appointment of Georg Pilhofer inadvisable. Stephan Lehner, who had arrived in New Guinea in 1902—three years before Pilhofer—became superintendent as a compromise candidate, despite some concerns Eppelein had about his leaning to American-Australian traditions and culture.

Blaming Steck's divisive influence was one way of explaining what Eppelein saw as a lack of loyalty to the traditions of Germany in general, and Neuendettelsau in particular. By the time Eppelein and his travelling companion Schuster left New Guinea, they had established between them a further reason for the disconcerting loss of German culture amongst the missionaries. Eppelein wrote:

Der Deutsche gibt sich nur zu leicht zum Kulturdünger fremder Völker hin und handelt nach dem

Germans give themselves away too easily as cultural fertilizer for foreign peoples and act

<sup>63</sup> 13.4.1930 Lehner was made superintendent.

<sup>64</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 306.

Grundsatz: "Wes Brot ich ess', des Lied ich sing". Die Versuchung, sein Deutschtum preiszugeben und einfach zu veranglisieren, war damals in Neu-guinea sehr groß. Ich sprach mit den deutschen Missionaren manch ernstes Wort...<sup>65</sup>

according to the principle: "Whose bread I eat, his song I sing". The temptation to abandon one's Germanness and to simply become Anglicanised was very big in New Guinea then. I had some serious words with the German missionaries...

Schuster agreed with his director, that the unfortunate trend amongst many of their missionaries was part of the 'hardships' German Diaspora communities faced everywhere in the world, including the German Lutheran community in South Africa and the Lutheran church in Australia. During their return trip during their stay in Rabaul, Schuster blamed Germany's 'political immaturity' during the previous centuries. Germany had not managed to secure a colonial empire to provide Germans abroad with a congenial environment in which to foster and preserve their cultural identity:

Wir Deutschen sind ueberall zu spaet aufgestanden & als wir endlich ein Volk waren, hat eine seiner groessten Parteien—die sozialistische—den Erwerb und Besitz von Kolonien als Unrecht und Unsinn bezeichnet & dagegen gehetzt & gearbeitet. So haben wir auch wieder verloren, was wir an Kolonien hatten & andere heimsen ein, was deutscher Fleiss gesaet & gepflanzt hat & will der Deutsche in fremden Land sein Leben fristen, so ist er in grosser Gefahr, dabei in fremdem Volkstum auf & unterzugehen. Die Erfahrungen auf der Reise nach N.Guinea, etwa in Rabaul ... haben mir dies neu bestaetigt. Man sieht ueberall von unserem Volk verpasste Gelegenheiten & Auswirkungen deutscher Uneinigkeit. Das sind im letzten Grund die Ursachen des Untergehens unseres Volkstums in fremden Voelkern.<sup>66</sup>

We Germans stood up everywhere too late & when we finally had become a people, one of its biggest parties - the socialist one - called the acquisition and possession of colonies unjust and nonsense & agitated and worked against it. Thus we again lost what colonies we had & others reaped what German industriousness had sewn and planted & if a German wants to lead his life in a foreign country, he is in great danger of being absorbed and submerged in foreign *Volkstum*. The experiences during our trip to N.Guinea, for example in Rabaul ... have confirmed this to me anew. One sees everywhere the opportunities our people have missed & the consequences of German disunity. These are ultimately the causes why our *Volkstum* declines within foreign nations.

Schuster and Eppelein left Australia with mixed emotions. They had negotiated for their society not only a share in the mission work, but also in the control. 'We have the right again', Schuster rejoiced, 'to talk about the N. Guinea mission as our mission'.<sup>67</sup> Unity and co-operation between the Lutherans involved promised a brighter future for the Neuendettelsauer society. The state of the Lutheran diaspora communities they visited, however, saddened the two emissaries from Neuendettelsau, especially when they considered what they perceived as a loss of German culture. A feeling of political powerlessness as German Lutherans, and as Germans, pervaded a lot of their writing during their year-long journey.

<sup>65</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIb, p. 409.

<sup>66</sup> A. Schuster (NG) 1929 - Im fremden Land und doch daheim. Reiseeindruecke waehrend eines 6 woechigen Aufenthalts in Australien, ALC NG LMF 56/51.

<sup>67</sup> A. Schuster (NG) 1929 - Im fremden Land und doch daheim. Reiseeindruecke waehrend eines 6 woechigen Aufenthalts in Australien, ALC NG LMF 56/5.



In March 1930 Eppelein and Schuster arrived in a disunited, fragmenting Germany. During their absence the crisis of the Weimar Republic had deepened, and in the space of twelve months developments in Germany had created an atmosphere of social and political discord, conflict and despair. In this environment questions of Volk, culture, and unity had been modified and intensified to such a degree that outsiders found it hard to comprehend. It had not been an easy return, Eppelein confided to the Australian church president Stolz eleven months later, and it had taken him a long time to find his feet again.<sup>68</sup> The Young Plan was being ratified by the German parliament, the depression had not eased, and the radical parties on both sides were gaining followers. In a circular to the mission staff in New Guinea Eppelein set out the consequences of the political situation for the Neuendettelsauer mission:

Beide Bewegungen (links und rechts) sind der Mission nicht günstig. Die Kommunisten sind, wie die russischen Verhältnisse zeigen, von einer satanischen Wut gegen jede Religion erfüllt. Die Nationalsozialisten (Hitler) haben sich noch nirgends offiziell zur Mission geäußert. Man hat aber den Eindruck, daß manche Völkische es für ein Unrecht ansehen, wenn angesichts der großen deutschen Not Geldmittel ins Ausland gehen, die, wie es eben von jenen Kreisen aufgefasst wird, indirekt nur den Räubern der deutschen Kolonien und der deutschen Missionsfelder dienen würden.<sup>69</sup>

Both movements (left and right) are not favourable to the mission. The Communists are, as the Russian situation shows, filled by a satanic rage against any religion. The National Socialists (Hitler) have not yet made an official statement in regard to the foreign mission. But one has the impression that many [members of the] *Voelkische* [movement] think it wrong, that in the face of the great German misery financial resources go abroad, which, as these circles understand, will indirectly only serve the robbers of the German colonies and German mission fields.

Having just regained some control and rights to the mission field in New Guinea, and with it additional responsibilities, Neuendettelsau could ill afford any drop in donations. Eppelein decided to appeal to the supporters of Neuendettelsau and discuss some of the arguments publicly in the mission's journal, drawing on his first-hand experience abroad.

In 1931, amidst the *Freimund* issues dealing with political parties was one devoted to the theme 'National Socialism and World Mission', and focused on two sections of Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*.<sup>70</sup> In the didactical form of question and answer<sup>71</sup> the *Freimund* stated:

Was geht die Neuendettelsauer Mission der Nationalsozialismus an?

Antwort:

Der Führer der Nationalsozialisten gibt in seinem Buch 'Mein Kampf' Werturteile über die Weltmission ab, die von seiten der evangelischen Kirche nicht unbeachtet bleiben können.<sup>72</sup>

What is National Socialism to the Neuendettelsauer Mission? [what concern of the ND mission is NS]

Answer:

The leader of the National Socialists in his book 'Mein Kampf' makes value judgements about world mission, which cannot be ignored by the Protestant church.

68 23.1.1931 Eppelein to Stolz, ND 54-21-3.

69 Januar 1931 Rundbrief ND to NG (ND 56/51).

70 *Freimund* 12.2.1931, Jg. 77, Nr. 7 "Nationalsozialismus und Weltmission".

71 The form used by many Protestant Catechisms, most importantly Luther's Catechism.

72 *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 49.

The passages quoted from '*Mein Kampf*' argued that churches in Germany missionized in Africa and Asia, while neglecting their own at home.

Während unsere europäischen Völker Gott sei Lob und Dank in den Zustand eines körperlichen und moralischen Aussatzes verfallen, wandert der fromme Missionar nach Zentralafrika und errichtet Negermissionen, bis unsere "höhere Kultur" aus gesunden, wenn auch primitiven und tiefstehenden Menschenkindern auch dort eine faulige Bastardenbrut gemacht haben wird.<sup>73</sup>

While our European people, praise be to the Lord, have fallen into a state of physical and moral leprosy, the pious missionary wanders off to central Africa and founds missions to Negroes, until our 'higher culture' has transformed healthy, albeit primitive and low-standing human beings into a rotten breed of bastards.

The quotes were followed by a short series of questions and answers and gave examples and figures as proof that Christian missions had been successful and useful, particularly in slowing the progress of Islam.<sup>74</sup> More complex ideological problems and concepts, which the quoted sections raised—racial theories, the notion of 'Volk' and the relationship of Christian mission and race—were addressed in an article by Eppelein about his personal experiences, entitled 'rays of light on National Socialism from my Australia-New Guinea travels'.<sup>75</sup> Eppelein's careful balancing between appreciation and demarcation led the reader first to noteworthy National Socialist ideas and how they resonated and were applied by missions, to then move on to some concerns. It was good, so Eppelein said, to remind Germans abroad who, having suffered contempt during and after WWI tended to desert their German culture and language, that they had every reason to be proud about their heritage. Seeing mixed race people in Capetown, who made a 'miserable and degenerate impression', reinforced for Eppelein the importance of racial purity. Eppelein used the metaphor of many flowers in a Voelker-garden, where each is meant to grow and flower according to its own kind:

So wie die einzelnen Pflanzen und Blumen ihre besondere Art haben und behalten sollen und auch da und dort Mischformen etwas Widernatürliches und schließlich zur Degeneration Führendes bedeuten, so sollen die einzelnen Rassen und Völker alle nach ihrer Art und Besonderheit in dem grossen Völker-garten der Welt wachsen, blühen und Frucht

In the same way as individual plants and flowers have and are meant to keep their distinct kind, and there, too, hybrid forms signify something unnatural and finally lead to degeneration, individual races and peoples shall grow according to their kind and distinctiveness in the big world-wide garden of peoples [nations], blossom and bear fruit according

<sup>73</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 49. The quotes give '*Mein Kampf*', pp. 292 and 445f as the source, without edition details. The section continues that Missions "pestered Negroes" instead of encouraging parents at home who would have degenerate offspring to follow eugenic guidelines, have no children and adopt orphans.

<sup>74</sup> There was one argument of Hitler's in particular the *Freimund*'s answer entitled 'what has the mission expert from a general world-mission point of view got to say to these allegations' tried to combat. Hitler had asserted that Christianity had used its resources wrongly and in an unethical way. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches kept directing resources into mission work in Asia and Africa in order to gain new followers. Yet while the results on the mission fields were modest at best, churches were losing millions of followers at home. By undertaking foreign mission work and as a consequence neglecting their responsibilities at home the churches had thus contributed to a decline of morality in Europe.

<sup>75</sup> Streiflichter auf den Nationalsozialismus von meiner Australien-Neuguineareise her, *Freimund* 1931, Jg 77, 12.2.1931, No. 7, pp.50-53. See also Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppeleins, 1961, p. 99.

bringen nach Gottes Willen, aber nicht widernatürlich vermisch werden.<sup>76</sup>

to God's wishes, but should not be mixed unnaturally.

Hitler also was right, Eppelein continued, to criticise one-sided foreign mission work. The home mission, which could 'fruitfully' utilise experiences made abroad, was an essential part of proper mission work. But especially important was, so Eppelein said, the emphasis National Socialism placed on 'organic' structures and the connectedness of human beings within the family, community and nation:

In den Gemeinden Neuguineas sind gerade unter dem Einfluss des Christentums solche Gemeindeorganismen erblüht, wie sie dem Nationalsozialismus als Ideal vorschweben.<sup>77</sup>

Such organic communities as National Socialism envisages as the ideal have blossomed within the communities in New Guinea under the influence of Christianity.

The Neuendettelsauer Mission knew, Eppelein said, that Christianity did not destroy what God had created, but brought it to perfection and completion.<sup>78</sup> Differences between races were real and God-given, and yet Christianity was meant by God to reach all people and peoples, rescue them from social and religious misery, and enable them to develop their Volk in their own way, as in New Guinea:

Nun kam die christliche Mission und lernte immer mehr den köstlichen Inhalt des über alle Zeiten und Völker und Rassen erhabenen Evangeliums von der äusseren Darstellungshülle der europäischen Darstellungsformen zu trennen und das reine Evangelium in die Gefässe papuanischen Volkstums, papuanischen Geisteslebens einzugiessen.<sup>79</sup>

Then came the Christian mission and it learned more and more to separate the sweet content of the gospel, which is beyond all time, peoples and races, from the outer layers of representation, and pour the pure gospel into the vessels of Papuan Volkstum and Papuan intellectual life.

Races, Eppelein continued, were distinct and separate, yet also connected and related within the *Voelkerfamilie* God had created.<sup>80</sup> National Socialism had to be careful not to overemphasise the importance of race and separateness, and sink down to a new kind

<sup>76</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 50. Eppelein mentions weakness of character of mixed bloods—it would be interesting what he thought about the endeavours of the mission school and children's home at Sattleberg, where children of mission staff were looked after together with some children of New Guinean mothers and German fathers, who had arranged for them to be educated there.

<sup>77</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 50.

<sup>78</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 50.

Die christliche Heils- und Erlösungsordnung hebt die göttliche Schöpfungsordnung nicht auf, sondern führt auch sie ihrer Vollendung entgegen.

The Christian doctrine of salvation and redemption does not annul the structures of creation, but drives them towards their perfection.

<sup>79</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 51. Eppelein's 'purifying' of the gospel has surprising similarities to Bultmann's project of demythologising the gospel.

<sup>80</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 52.

Nicht die arische Rasse, nicht nur das deutsche Volk sind, wie schon an anderer Stelle erwähnt, aus Gottes Schöpferhand hervorgegangen, sondern alle Völker der Welt. ... Bei aller Verschiedenheiten der Gaben und Anlagen sind doch auch die Völker aufeinander angewiesen und kann auch kein Volk ungestraft sich den gottgegebenen Verpflichtungen entziehen, die es an anderen Gliedern der großen Völkerfamilie gegenüber hat

Not the Aryan race, not only the German people, as mentioned beforehand, emanated from God's creating hands, but all peoples of the world. ... Even though peoples have different gifts and inherited abilities, they are nevertheless dependent on each other, and no people can withdraw unpunished from the God-given responsibilities it has towards other members of the big family of peoples.

of materialism based on racial ideology. Spiritual renewal of all members of all races was important, and the German foreign mission had contributed effectively to this:

Ja, man kann sagen, daß gerade die Art und Weise, wie deutsche (sic) Mission getrieben haben, dazu beigetragen hat den deutschen Namen in der Weltchristenheit zu Ehren zu bringen und zwar gerade auch zu der Zeit, da unser Volk im Weltkrieg schliesslich Niederlagen über Niederlagen erlitt.<sup>81</sup>

Well, one can say, that especially the manner in which Germans conducted mission work has contributed to Germany's name being in honour amongst the world's Christians and this at a time when our people suffered defeat after defeat during the world war.

The *Freimund's* answer to National Socialist hostility towards the foreign mission was that not only was Christianity not corrupting other races—as long as it was brought in the right form—but the foreign mission was also beneficial for Germany and Germans. The German foreign mission had gained experience and developed methods that could be implemented at home, and it strengthened Germany's reputation and 'honour' abroad.

One year later Eppelein again used the *Freimund* to restate many of his arguments in a short article 'May we Protestant Germans today still undertake a foreign mission?'<sup>82</sup> Readers were advised that the text was also available as a flyer for hanging up or handing out costing 5 Pfennig for one. But if 50 flyers were ordered the price would only be 3 Pfennig each. The article tried to address the increasing conviction of National Socialists and other patriotic nationalists that giving money for foreign mission activities was wrong, and started with a letter to the *Freimund* expressing exactly these sentiments.

Wie kommen wir ausgepowerten Deutschen dazu, heute große Geldsummen für eine uns geraubte Kolonie auszugeben? ... Deutsches Geld nur für Deutsche.<sup>83</sup>

How dare we worn-out Germans today give large sums for a colony stolen from us? ... German money only for Germans.

Eppelein conceded that it was distressing for the Neuendettelsauer missionaries to have to work in a colony stolen from the German people, but asked the readers to make a distinction between mission work and colonialism. Also, Eppelein continued, the 'poor natives in New Guinea' were heartbroken 'that they are no longer under German rule, but were forcibly handed over to the Australians'. Further, more than half of the donations given for the foreign mission were of direct benefit to the German economy, and experiences gained abroad would benefit *Volksmission* at home. In stressing the benefits of a foreign mission for Germany, Eppelein pursued not so much a defence

<sup>81</sup> *Freimund* 1931, Jg. 77, p. 52.

<sup>82</sup> *Freimund* No 14, 7 April 1932, pp. 1-6, quote p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> *Freimund* No. 14, 7.4.1932, p. 1

strategy, but rather a 'mission' strategy.<sup>84</sup> This strategy aimed at influencing supporters who had become unsure and endeavoured at the same time not to alienate nationalistic Lutherans hostile to a foreign mission, but tried to meet them on their own ground, and show how much of it was shared by Neuendettelsau. Eppelein concluded:

So ist die Heidenmission für die evangelischen Deutschen in schwerer Notzeit gerade ein Prüfstein der Liebe und Treue nicht nur gegenüber den Angehörigen fremder Völker, sondern auch gegenüber Gott und dem eigenen Volk.

Thus the foreign mission is for Protestant Germans in difficult times a special test of their love and faithfulness not only to members of foreign peoples, but towards God and their own Volk.

Eppelein was convinced that his was a voice of moderation within the heated nationalistic atmosphere in Germany. Asked by the Australian Lutherans to clarify Neuendettelsau's attitude to nationalism and colonial revisionism, Eppelein sent his pamphlet to Theile, explaining that he was far closer to their point of view than they assumed.<sup>85</sup> Theile and the Australian Lutherans had been alarmed by remarks by Geheimrat (privy councillor) Dr Doerfler, a medical professional, linked to Neuendettelsau, which had been published in the magazine *Die Ärztliche Mission* in early 1932.<sup>86</sup> Theile was particularly nervous, as new negotiations between the Lutheran mission partners—this time in Columbus, Ohio—were imminent, and it was already clear that far-reaching changes for the mission field were to follow. Theile opened his heart to his church president Stolz:

Und wenn der Administrator den Satz auf Seite 20 lesen wuerde, wo der Vorsitzende des Bayrischen Vereins fuer aerztliche Mission ... sagt: "Jedenfalls sind wir mit der aussendenden Missionsgesellschaft einig in dem Ziele, ... der Gesellschaft ihr Missionsfeld ungeschmaelert zu erhalten und vielleicht, so Gott will, dazu beizutragen, dass das fruehere deutsche Kolonialland bei guenstigeren politischen Konstellationen wieder zu Deutschland zurueckkehrt", so wuerde er sagen: das habe ich ja immer behauptet!--87

And if the Administrator read the sentence on page 20, where the chairman of the Bavarian society for the medical mission says: "We share, however, the goal with the mission society, which is sending out [missionaries], ... to maintain the society's mission field undiminished, ... and perhaps, so God will, contribute under more opportune political constellation to a return of the former German colony to Germany", he would say: this is what I always said!--

The problem of how creating a German-controlled mission field was related to more political demands for German colonial possessions continued to occupy Neuendettelsau's Lutheran partners abroad, particularly in Australia. These concerns resurfaced throughout the various steps of the lengthy process of making the Finschhafen mission 'German' again, beginning with the preparations for the Columbus

84 Eppelein argued that the experiences gained in the foreign mission could help Germans value, appreciate and preserve their Volkstum, instead of falling for 'fatal' ideologies of internationalism, while on the other hand preventing them from sinking into nationalistic megalomania and race-materialism.

85 3.12.1932 Eppelein to Theile, ND 53/31.

86 *Die aerztliche Mission*, No 1, 1932.

87 26 February 1932, FO Theile to JJ Stolz, Lutheran Archives Adelaide, UELCA-NG Missions: Correspondence -FO Theile to JJ Stolz 1921-1932.

negotiations in 1931 up to the final legal incorporation of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen in Rabaul in 1933.

Writing to Australia and America, Neuendettelsau distanced itself from Dr Doerfler. He was old, not really a 'Dettelsauer', and was not a man of the church, but a medical doctor.<sup>88</sup> Neuendettelsau had neither initiated nor endorsed any of Dr Doerfler's statements. Christian Keyßer appealed to Friedrich Braun and the ALC for some tolerance and understanding. Switching from mission politics to national politics he asked whether British and American newspapers were not also reporting many wrong things about Germany.<sup>89</sup> Eppelein's answer to Theile likewise linked mission affairs with national concerns. Not only was the foreign mission under attack in Germany, but Germany itself had to be on the defensive, particularly as France was accelerating armament. Thus all actions of a Christian in Germany had to be done with 'the responsibility towards his fatherland' in mind. Living in Australia this was probably hard to understand for Theile, Eppelein conceded, but if he came to Germany he would change his views:

Bruder Pilhofer hat mir ganz offen gesagt, daß er mich in Neuguinea nicht verstanden habe, wenn ich auch nationale Gesichtspunkte sprechen ließ, jetzt aber, nachdem er in Deutschland die Verhältnisse selbst kennengelernt habe, verstünde er mich voll und ganz.<sup>90</sup>

Brother Pilhofer told me openly, that in New Guinea he had not understood me, when I also voiced national considerations, but now, after he has come to know the situation in Germany himself, he understands me well and truly..

To facilitate more understanding of the German circumstances Eppelein sent political pamphlets and booklets not only to Australia<sup>91</sup>, but also to the mission personnel in New Guinea. Yet the strategic conclusions Eppelein drew for the future of the mission field did not come as naturally to his colleagues as they came to him.

88 Johann Flierl in contrast wrote that Doerfler had been close to the Neuendettelsauer society for a long time, had taken part in one meeting of the board, and 'should have been better informed'. 23.5.1932 Johann Fliert to Eppelein, UELCA, NG Special, Flierl SR - documents and letters.

89 29.2.1932 Keyßer to F. Braun, Archives of the ALC in Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque; ALC NG LMF 52/21.

90 3.12.1932 Eppelein to Theile, ND 53/31.

91 Eppelein sent for example two flyers to Theile: 'Die Aeussere Mission im Dritten Reich' (foreign mission in the Third Reich) and 'Der Hitlersturm auf die evangelische Kirche' (Hitler's assault on the Protestant church). 3.12.1932 Eppelein to Theile, ND 53/31.

## Alea Jacta Est - The Die Is Cast

### Lamentations

You in the field are placed in an unenviable position in the middle. You cannot disown and forget Neuendettelsau, but you also cannot forget what America has done for you. You owe loyalty for loyalty ...

*Ihr auf dem Felde steht nun in einer wenig beneidenswerten Stellung dazwischen. Ihr koennt Neuendettelsau nicht verleugnen und vergessen, Ihr koennt aber auch nicht vergessen was Amerika fuer Euch getan. Ihr schuldet Treue um Treue ...*

28.11.1931 Theile to W. Flierl<sup>92</sup>

In January 1932 the Rheinische Mission in Barmen, which had doubled its field personnel in the year after taking over its old mission field in New Guinea,<sup>93</sup> decided that it did not have enough financial resources to continue to support and run its Madang mission, especially as it had agreed to pay back to the American Lutherans their money put into the Madang area. Would the ALC be willing, Barmen asked, through Neuendettelsau as their intermediary, to take over the Madang mission?<sup>94</sup> Barmen's departure from mission work in New Guinea solved many problems associated with how to divide the Finschhafen mission field between Neuendettelsau and the American Lutherans, and brought the bitter and tension-ridden negotiations of the last years about the borders of separate spheres of interest to an end. But adopting the old, pre-war borders between the two mission fields, which had been run as one entity from WWI on, still left other facilities to be disentangled. The united Lutheran Mission New Guinea had one sawmill, one hospital, and staff of varying nationalities spread over the whole of the mission.<sup>95</sup> To settle these matters and Barmen's withdrawal, new negotiations were scheduled for early 1932 at Columbus, Ohio. Hosting the event, the ALC in a last gesture of generosity paid US \$300 for Director

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92 UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

93 From 1929 to 1930 the Rheinische Mission doubled its staff from 10 to 20 members. Figures derived from the name and organisational index in Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986.

94 For more details see Gerhard O. Reitz, 'Partnership across Oceans. The American Lutheran Church', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 155.

95 With the setting up of spheres of interest the relocation of some missionaries had already begun, and German missionaries were moved out of the American sphere, and Americans out of the German sphere; the total separation of the Finschhafen and Madang fields, however, had as a consequence relocation on a much larger scale. See Table: Field Personnel of the Lutheran Mission New Guinea in 1929. American missionaries who had to be relocated were for example Pietz, Hueter and Foege

Eppelein's fare to America.<sup>96</sup> But the American Lutherans were adamant that after the separation there would be no more financial support for Neuendettelsau. Neuendettelsau's insistence since 1931 that it needed a mission field solely controlled by the German motherhouse and staffed with its own missionaries had 'paid off'. The end of the transnational Lutheran cooperation, put in place in Brisbane in 1929, had come.

There was relief in Germany, and bitterness and disappointment in Australia, America and New Guinea about this development. The vagueness of the Brisbane agreements had led to ongoing disputes, and everybody involved, particularly Theile, had invested a lot of work and emotion in order to hold the partnership together. The compromises made in 1929 had created an ambivalent collaboration, which—lacking any structures for resolving disagreements—was based on togetherness and good will, but at the same time institutionalized division and 'apartness' by setting up separate spheres of interest. That the agreements had failed to specify borders or a process for creating these spheres had planted the seed for future conflict.<sup>97</sup> Theile was adamant that the development of separate fields was not due to an insufficient, inadequate agreement, but to a lack of Christian character and virtues on the part of the German Lutherans. Worn out by 'poisonous' to and fro, Theile had complained to Wilhelm Flierl at the end of 1931:

Solche Abmachungen, wie sie in Brisbane getroffen erfordern ein grosses Mass von Selbstverleugnung seitens jedes Beteiligten, ein keusches Zurueckhalten bis sich entwickle was man ange-regt und angefangen, bis heranwachse was man gepflanzt. Daran aber hat es gefehlt und trotz aller Pietäet, die ich dem von mir so hochgeschaetzten Neuendettelsau entgegenbringe muss ich sagen, dass dort der Hauptfehler liegt<sup>98</sup>

Such agreements as were made in Brisbane demand a high degree of self-denial from everybody involved, a chaste withholding until that develops which one has initiated and started, and until that has grown which one had planted. But this was lacking and despite all reverence towards Neuendettelsau, which I hold in high esteem, I have to say that the main fault lies there.

The field's new superintendent, Stephan Lehner, could not understand Neuendettelsau's way of thinking. Reading through Eppelein's descriptions of the political and economic crisis in Germany, Lehner wondered what good it would do to deprive part of the mission field of American support. In no uncertain terms Lehner warned Eppelein that

<sup>96</sup> 4.1.1932 FO Theile to JJ Stolz, Lutheran Archives Adelaide UELCA-NG Missions, Correspondence FO Theile to JJ Stolz 1921-32.

<sup>97</sup> Settling on any process of decision making would probably have been impossible. Neuendettelsau had fundamentally different ideas about how to reach a decision from its American and Australian partners. The Neuendettelsauer society followed the idea that quality was more important than quantity, and rejected democratic processes.

<sup>98</sup> 28.11.1931 Theile to W. Flierl, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.



the mission's reorganisation would have political implications in the Mandated territory:

Welch einen Eindruck wird die Enthüllung unserer Trennung auf die Auszenstehenden machen, vor allem auf die Regierung? In Achtung steigen wir sicher nicht.<sup>99</sup>

What impression will the revelation of our separation make on outsiders, especially the government? We will certainly not gain in respect.

The presence of American and Australian Lutherans, Lehner asserted, had been a protection from potential anti-German sentiments and policies of the Administration, which had been an undercurrent, but might come to the fore after the Finschhafen mission was again taken over by the German mother society:

Von Seiten der Weiszen müssen wir uns wohl auch bei Bekanntwerden der Trennung manch böses Gerücht gefallen lassen als unverträgliche Leute, und ob die Regierung nicht den Schlusz zieht: Können die German's nicht mit ihren amerikanischen Mitarbeitern auskommen, brauchen wir uns zu wundern, dasz sie fortwährend wider uns zu klagen haben?<sup>100</sup>

When the separation gets known, we will have to put up with some bad rumors from the white people that we are irreconcilable people, and the government might come to the conclusion: If the Germans cannot get along with their American fellow workers, why should we be amazed that they complain about us all the time?

Negotiations with government, Lehner feared, would in the future be hampered by these Australian sentiments, as well as by a lack of cultural understanding and language skills:

O wäre man nur im Englischen so zuhause, wie man es nicht ist, dann könnte man auch noch anders auftreten, aber so ist man ein Fremder. ... In dieser Beziehung war das Zusammensein mit den Amerikanern ein gewisser Schutz. Die Katholiken wissen, warum sie Amerikaner bei sich haben.<sup>101</sup>

Oh if only one was more familiar with English than one is, one could take a different stance, but as it is one is a stranger ... In this regard being together with the Americans was a certain protection. The Catholics know why they have Americans with them.

Wilhelm Flierl, in charge as sub-superintendent, *Präses*, of the German sphere of interest, agreed with his superintendent Lehner's pessimistic prognosis of the new situation a mission identified as German would find itself in. One and a half months before the agreed take over date, which was January 1 1933, Flierl warned Eppelein:

Die Luth. Mission Finschhafen wird als rein deutsche Mission bei jeder ernstlichen Meinungsverschiedenheit mit der Regierung vor einem unüberwindlichen Wall von Misstrauen stehen<sup>102</sup>.

As a solely German mission the Luth. Mission Finschhafen will during every serious disagreement with the government be confronted by an insurmountable wall of distrust.

He suggested to Eppelein to try and counter some of these difficulties by selecting any new superintendent with great care. A new leader of the mission at Finschhafen had to have the field personnel behind him, and needed a certain, necessary freedom for

99 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

100 17.8.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

101 12.10.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

102 17.11.1932 Wilhelm Flierl to Eppelein, ND 53/13.

decisions on the spot. But most important was, Flierl explained, ‘that the government not harbour mistrust against him from the first.’ Flierl, like Lehner, saw the solution for overcoming the political problems arising from the disbanding of the transnational collaboration as having at least a non-German local front-person:

Das letztere Hindernis [Misstrauen] wäre am leichtesten ausgeschaltet durch australische Staatsangehörigkeit des Betreffenden.  
[ftn:] Wahrscheinlich würde es nur dadurch ausgeschaltet werden können<sup>103</sup>

The latter handicap [distrust] would be eliminated easily by Australian nationality of the respective person.  
[ftn:] Probably it could only be eliminated through that.

Stephan Lehner was especially worried that Pilhofer, who was then on holidays in Germany and based in Neuendettelsau<sup>104</sup>, would try to influence policy planning and have his ideas about the future of the mission implemented.

Barmen’s withdrawal from the Madang mission field meant that Pilhofer’s suggestions on where to draw a border between the American and German Lutheran Missions were obsolete, as the American Lutherans would take over the Madang mission, and the Finschhafen mission field would remain undivided. Pilhofer’s underlying strategic plan, however, and its accompanying practical details were not influenced by this change—on the contrary. The possible division of the Finschhafen field had never been one of Pilhofer’s aims, as Wilhelm Flierl, superintendent for the German sphere of interest, had pointed out to Theile.<sup>105</sup> Pilhofer, so Flierl said, had only contributed suggestions on a future border to make the best out of an unfortunate development. An undivided Finschhafen mission field was, however, a far better starting point for the development of a unity of people and church that Pilhofer aspired to build.

Lehner was suspicious of Pilhofer’s influence on Eppelein, and was quick to observe, like Theile, that some of Neuendettelsau’s plans on how to restructure and reorganize a future Finschhafen mission under Neuendettelsau’s sole control had an uncanny resemblance to Pilhofer’s ideas:

Merkwürdig ist, dasz gewisse Gendanken und Pläne, die mit Sprachpolitik, Anschaffung eines Flugzeuges und gewissermaßen Schaffung eines Kirchenstaates, wenn ich mich des Ausdruckes bedienen darf, den schon vor dem Krieg der stellvertretende Gouverneur Oswald für hiesiges

It is strange, that certain thoughts and plans have come back about language politics, purchase of a plane and in some way the creation of a church-controlled state, if I may use this expression, which was coined by the deputy Governor Oswald before the war for this area here, thoughts and

103 17.11.1932 Wilhelm Flierl to Eppelein, ND 53/13. Flierl had been deputy superintendent from 1930-Jan 1932. Flierl later suggested 1. Pilhofer, 2. Lehner as superintendent, and asked not to be given the position. He finally accepted the appointment ‘mit Bedenken’, with doubts and concerns.

104 Missionaries went home to Germany at regular intervals for recovery holidays, during which they had to do lecture tours and church meeting talks.

105 29.5.1932 W. Flierl to Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

Gebiet geprägt hat, Gedanken und Pläne, die doch | plans, which truly have been rejected.  
wirklich widerlegt, nun wiederkehren.<sup>106</sup>

Reminding Eppelein of past tensions between the German colonial government and Pilhofer, Lehner tried to steer his argument out of present political debates—including criticism of the Australian Administration—and focus on wider consequences and deeper ideological problems flowing from Pilhofer's ideas and actions. Agreeing more or less with Pilhofer's central concept of a united Christian (Lutheran) people, Lehner tried to discredit the steps proposed by Pilhofer to achieve this end. Unity was indeed desirable, Lehner argued, and so was a *lingua franca*, but Pilhofer's ideas confused cause and effect. The mission should contribute to fostering inner unity, so that New Guineans came to see themselves as one people<sup>107</sup>, and then as a consequence and second step would want to develop one unified language. Pilhofer's plan to buy a plane to facilitate the push of the mission inland was too ambitious and expensive, and would, Lehner remarked, 'certainly end in an Icarus flight'.<sup>108</sup> More important than language policies and the strategic expansion of the mission for Lehner, however, were the implications Pilhofer's vision had for the relationship between the Australian Administration and the mission, and he devoted most effort and space to convincing Eppelein how fraught with danger it was to follow Pilhofer's lead:

Und zum letzten Punk [Kirchenstaat] möchte ich nur sagen, seine wir bei aller Bestimmtheit doch ja recht vorsichtig. Die Verhältnisse richten sich nicht nach uns, und wir müssen das Beste aus ihnen machen.<sup>109</sup>

And about the last point [a church-controlled state] I only want to say, that [while we should be] assertive we should at the same time also be very careful. The circumstances here do not centre round us, and we have to make the best out of it.

Having mentioned deputy Governor Oswald and the German colonial government earlier, Lehner, who had witnessed Eppelein's attitude to Australian rule only a few years earlier, tried to clarify further the Australian Administration's approach by comparing it to other colonial governments:

Und wir haben trotz aller Unannehmlichkeiten mit etlichen der Unterbeamten im Verhältnis zu anderen Missionen, wie etwa in China und anderswo Anlass zu Dank gegen Gott, für die Regierung, die wir haben.<sup>110</sup>

And despite all the unpleasantness with a number of subordinate officials we have in comparison to other missions, like for example in China or elsewhere, reason to thank God for the government we have.

<sup>106</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

<sup>107</sup> The term Lehner used was "einheitlichem Volksbewusstsein".

<sup>108</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

<sup>109</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

<sup>110</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12. See also 12.10.1932 Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12:

Lehner was careful to make it clear to Epplein that he was not siding with the Administration or Australian interests, but that he had the mission's best interest at heart. Traversing a theological minefield, he tried to spell out the inappropriateness of Pilhofer's vision in terms of its political consequences:

Wir werden den Worten unseres D.[istrict] O.[fficers] recht geben müssen. Wenn auch ein immer besseres Verhältnis seitens der Regierung zur Mission und umgekehrt angestrebt werden muss, kann und darf die Mission doch keinen eigenen Verwaltungsbezirk schaffen wollen mit Ausnahmebestimmungen. Eine Neben-regierung mehr oder weniger ausgeübt von Missionaren duldet kein Government und duldet es nirgends. Nun bin ich mir wohl bewusst, keiner unserer Missionare will eine Nebenregierung beanspruchen, aber sie suchen die Rechte der Eingeborenen, wie es ihre Pflicht ist, zu wahren, und meinen dafür solle die Regierung sich einsetzen, also, sie solle Ausnahmen machen.<sup>111</sup>

We will have to agree with the words of our D.[istrict] O.[fficer]. Even though a better attitude of the government towards the mission and conversely has to be aspired to, the mission should not and may not try to create an administrative district of its own with special regulations. An additional government run more or less by missionaries will not be tolerated by any government anywhere. I am well aware that none of our missionaries want an additional government, but they seek to protect the rights of the natives, as is their duty, and are of the opinion that this should be supported by the government, meaning it should grant exemptions.

Knowing Pilhofer was in a position to reply instantly to all arguments raised, Lehner attempted to incorporate and refute possible counter-arguments. In addition, Lehner was well aware that while Epplein was not unreservedly on the side of Keyßer and Pilhofer when it came to mission strategies, especially in regard to the question of how to implement the approach and policies derived from New Guinea at home in Germany, on one central point the new Neuendettelsau under Epplein's leadership was united. The Neuendettelsauer Mission, like all Christian communities, was to endeavor to influence the wider community and create united homogeneous entities based on Christian values and moralities—preferably hand in hand with the respective political leaders, but if necessary against the political powers of the day. Criticism of mission policies by the Administration was, in this view, not a legitimate argument, but called for counter-criticism of the Administration. Lehner struggled to argue that what Neuendettelsau saw as an essential enterprise, creating spaces where New Guineans

Sehr geehrter Herr Direktor, Sie haben das beunruhigende Gefühl, dass die Eingeborenen Politik der Austrl. Regierung unserer Missionwerk sehr beeinträchtigt. Ich darf Sie versichern, wenn jemand beunruhigt wird fort und fort, bin ich es. Englische Eingeborenen-Politik auf der ganzen Welt, ist, was die deutsche zuweilen auch war, trotz aller Rede: Die Eingeborenen sind das beste Aktivum der Kolonie....Je nach Gesinnung der einzelnen Beamten kann der Egoismus sich noch mit Missionsfeindschaft paaren. Die Feindschaft ist meist hervorgewachsen aus Neid über den Einfluss den die Mission unter dem Volke hat

Dear Herr Director, you have the disturbing feeling, that the native policy of the Australian government negatively affects our mission very much. Let me assure you that if anybody is repeatedly disturbed, it is I. British native policy the world over is, what the German also was at times, despite all the talk to the contrary: the natives are the colony's best asset. ... Depending on the attitude of the individual official egoism can go hand in hand with hostility towards the missions. The hostilities have their origins in the envy regarding the influence that the mission exerts amongst the people.

<sup>111</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Epplein, ND 53/12.

could live unhindered as a Christian community, was taken too far by Pilhofer, and that the Australian Administration had a just point in feeling aggrieved. Thus Lehner avoided more thorough theological argumentation and turned to political implications and a barely veiled personal attack on Pilhofer:

Jedenfalls war es mir auffällig, dasz sowohl Mr. Feldt, unser derzeitige (sic) D.O. wie auch Mr. Cardew, Commissioner of Native Affairs, jeder unabhängig vom andern, auch zeitlich ganz verschieden mich fragten: Erwarten Sie Mr. Pilhofer wieder zurück? Sicherlich sagte ich, Vorsicht ist also geboten.<sup>112</sup>

In any case it caught my attention that both Mr. Feldt, our present D.O., and Mr. Cardew, Commissioner of Native Affairs, each independent of the other and at completely different times asked me: Do you expect Mr. Pilhofer back? Of course I said, thus caution is necessary.

A few weeks earlier, Friedrich Örtel, missionary to the Azera since 1917<sup>113</sup>, had voiced his reservations to Pilhofer in a far more blunt and less diplomatic way. Örtel had never been shy in making his opinions heard—in his notes of his visit to New Guinea Eppelein had complained of Örtel's 'lack of discipline'<sup>114</sup>—but by 1932 he had reached a point where he seemingly had nowhere to go and nothing to lose. Throughout the long and heated debates about the shape of a future language policy Örtel had consistently defended the use of the Azera language. Supported neither by the proponents of a single lingua franca (Kate) nor by those advocating a dual language policy (Jabem and Kate), Örtel knew that he was fighting a losing battle. Returned from his recreation leave in Germany, Örtel used the opportunity to give a discussion paper about language policies at the main conference of 1932.<sup>115</sup> After complaining bitterly about the dictatorial way in which the decision for bilingualism had been made by the home organisation and missionaries and New Guineans ordered to implement it, Örtel went on to a scathing criticism of the ideological foundations of Neuendettelsau's language policies. The perceived necessity to connect church and *Volk*, Örtel argued, was neither biblical nor appropriate for New Guinea:

Ich weiß nicht wie weit unser deutscher Begriff von Volk und unsere nationale Einstellung mit hereingespielt hat und vielleicht auch irregeführt hat. ... Sie [Neuguineaner] sind höchstens Dorfschaften, sind aber kein Stamm, keine Nation, kein Volk. Wie gut daß der Herr nicht in unserer deutschen Sprache gesprochen und das Wort Völker gebraucht

I am not sure how far our German concept of Volk and our national attitude was involved and perhaps has led us astray. ... They [New Guineans] are at the most village communities, but are no tribe, no nation, no people. How good that the Lord did not speak in our German language and used the word Völker. Völker are simply not there,

<sup>112</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

<sup>113</sup> Örtel had visited the area since 1912. See Herwig Wagner, 'Beginnings at Finschhafen', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 60.

<sup>114</sup> Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen*, p. 174.

<sup>115</sup> Friedrich Örtel, *Fragen und Erwägungen über eingeborenen Einheitssprache und Zukunft der Sprachsplitter unseres Missionsfeldes*, Unpublished Paper, main conference 1932; ND 55/10.

hat. Völker sind einfach nicht da, aber Ethnā  
sind da und das genügt uns.

but Ethne<sup>116</sup> are there, and that is enough for  
us.

The Neuendettelsauer Mission, Örtel claimed, was in danger of perverting Christianity by reversing Jesus' word to transform 'all peoples into disciples':

Aber daß die Jünger sich zu Völkern zusammen-schließen oder daß wir sie zusammen-schließen müßten, steht nirgen geschrieben. ... Es wäre ein Verwirren in die Händel dieser Welt und in die Politik der Kulturstaaen die die Kolonie innehaben.

But that the disciples shall unite to form peoples or that we should unite them stands nowhere. ... This would be an entanglement into the dealings of this world and into the politics of the civilised nations which occupy the colony.

Targeting Pilhofer, Örtel contended that this politicizing of Jesus' mission-instruction had gone beyond language policies, and included for example the attempt by the mission to influence the introduction of native courts. Political consequences were already visible. The areas most inspired by the idea of one lingua franca, Örtel asserted, showed a stronger tendency to reject everything Australian in favour of everything German than other regions of the mission field. But make no mistake, Örtel warned, the end result would be race-hatred and rejection of all white people.

Premised on a rather orthodox, old-fashioned Lutheranism, Örtel's critique was based on the argument that the worldly realm and the spiritual realm were and ought to be strictly separate. Following the logic of this premise, Örtel defiantly asserted that any attempt by the mission to manipulate language use in New Guinea was doomed to fail. In vain did the mission try to stop the spread of English or Pidgin. Kate and Jabem would fade, Örtel predicted, but Pidgin would be New Guinea's language of the future.

The Neuendettelsauer leadership did not listen to either Lehner or Örtel. Örtel was instructed to cease any further debate about language policies and threatened that further resistance to a bilingual language policy would lead to his removal from his mission station in the Azera region. Lehner's warnings not to follow Pilhofer's vision, and his pleas to keep the transnational Lutheran working collaboration on the mission field, were answered by accusations made by Christian Keyßer that Lehner was pro-American and did not care about Neuendettelsau.

Neuendettelsau's insistence on internal discipline and on showing a united front to anybody outside its organisation, which had led to Lossin's dismissal, also guided its

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<sup>116</sup> Örtel is alluding to the original Greek wording of the *Missionsbefehl*, the command to missionize in Matthew 28.19, which uses the word ????, plural of ????? meaning race, tribe, gentile, while the German translation by Luther uses the term *Völker*, peoples.

approach to discontent and criticism of the personnel in the field. Theile saw this as an unfortunate and recent change of approach. He confided to Wilhelm Flierl that he had always admired how under Deinzer's leadership Neuendettelsau had granted a remarkable level of freedom of activities and administration to personnel on the field:

Wir Australier und Amerikaner haben aus unserer demokratischen Einstellung heraus dem Personal auf dem Felde die Selbstständigkeit bestaetigt und erweitert. Und jetzt will Neuendettelsau diese Freiheit ganz und gar beschaenken.<sup>117</sup>

We Australians and Americans have because of our democratic attitude confirmed and expanded the independence of the personnel in the field. And now Neuendettelsau wants to totally restrict this freedom.

While Theile was slightly overstating his case—especially in regard to Neuendettelsau's history and traditions<sup>118</sup>—he had a point. Consequently, discontent on the field over Eppelein's style of leadership would continue to grow during the 1930s. Restrictions imposed by the National Socialist regime, especially on collecting and sending money, and a self-imposed lack of clear and open communication in letters and cables from Germany which were expected to be read by government agencies before they left the country, did not help. In 1938 Wilhelm Flierl, by then Lehner's successor as superintendent of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen and on recreation leave in Germany, delivered an ultimatum from the field staff demanding—unsuccessfully—Eppelein's immediate resignation.<sup>119</sup>

The disentangling and unravelling of the transnational Lutheran collaboration caused much more conflict and emotional grief than many of the leading men in Neuendettelsau anticipated. Labelling Lehner's objections and pleas as simply 'pro-American', as Keyßer did, was a complete misunderstanding of Lehner's motivations. Yet Keyßer was right to see Lehner's objections based on his closeness to the other, non-German Lutheran mission partners. Beyond the layer of political analysis and

<sup>117</sup> 28.10.1931 Theile to W. Flierl, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

<sup>118</sup> The Brothers Deinzer, successors to the founding generation of the society, oversaw the beginning of Neuendettelsau-controlled foreign mission. Before the foundation of the New Guinea mission Neuendettelsau trained pastors and missionaries for the service in other churches and synods. While the organisation of the new mission in New Guinea might have carried some of the structures of the period of 'sending out' and allowed more independence and initiative than the more firmly established mission structure later, the seminary during the Deinzer period was characterized by firm control of the students' reading, use of time and behaviour, and the approach was strictly hierarchical.

<sup>119</sup> Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein Vol. Iib, p. 405, quoting letter 19.1.1938 Eppelein to Theile: Wilhelm Flierl asked Eppelein on Thursday, 13.1.1938 to resign, as he had lost the trust of the field personnel. 'Sie braechten in Neuguinea einen Seelsorger und dazu fehlten mir die Voraussetzungen.' 'They needed [somebody focusing on] pastoral care and for that I lacked the pre-condition'. See also 4.2.1938 Theile to Eppelein, quoted in Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. Iib, p. 407; the chairman of the society, Obmann Wirth, supported Eppelein remaining director. One reason was that in such politically difficult times a change of director was a risk the society could not afford to take. See Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. Iib, p. 408.

suggestions for practical remedies lay deep grief and pain about the impending separation of the united Lutheran Missions which was not only affecting bureaucratic management, but everyday life and work on the mission field. In the months before January 1933, the date the Lutheran partners had set for the beginning of the new independent mission fields, American staff were moved out of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, and into the Madang mission field. Lehner described to Eppelein what this meant to him and his fellow missionaries:

Gestern hatten wir die wehmütige Sitzung mit unseren amerikanischen Brüdern zusammen. Es war eine Art Spezialkonferenz. Von lieben Mitarbeitern, mit denen man zum Teil Schulter an Schulter gearbeitet hat, ein Jahrzehnt gearbeitet hat, die man achtet und lieben lernte sich zu trennen, ist nicht ganz einerlei.<sup>120</sup>

Yesterday we had a melancholy meeting with our American brothers. It was a kind of special conference. To part with dear co-workers, with whom one has worked to some extent shoulder to shoulder, worked for a decade, whom one learned to regard and hold in affection, is not just nothing.

On the basis of his observations and talks during his visit in New Guinea, Eppelein had interpreted many religious-political attitudes of German missionaries similar to the sentiments expressed by Lehner as a lack of loyalty to German culture and tradition, born partly out of defiance to Steck and a lack of discipline, partly out of weakness in the face of ongoing pressure within the British sphere to acculturate. For those in Neuendettelsau, living in the heated atmosphere of rising nationalism within Germany, 'pro-Americanism' was seen as a weakness of character, a betrayal of Neuendettelsau, its specific traditions, and last but not least of Germany, the downtrodden fatherland.

Rather than stretching their own hand out across national boundaries, Neuendettelsau expected the American Lutherans to repent of the injustices their nation had inflicted on Germany. The simmering resentments, held more or less under control during the Brisbane negotiations, had turned into open hostility. Eppelein wrote to Johann Flierl:

Es gibt bei uns weite Kreise, die erklären, die Amerikanische Lutherische Kirche wäre es Neuendettelsau schuldig, die ganze NG Mission zu finanzieren, um einigermaßen wieder gut zu machen die Verbrechen, die der Amerikanische Staat am deutschen Volk begangen hat dadurch, daß er 1917 in den Weltkrieg mit eingetreten ist.<sup>121</sup>

There are extended circles here which declare that the American Lutheran Church owed it to Neuendettelsau to finance the whole NG mission, in order to make up to some extent for the crimes that the American nation committed on the German people by joining the world war in 1917.

<sup>120</sup> 15.10.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12. In the letter Lehner set out to Eppelein that the Americans were upset by a protocol of the Rheinische mission leaked to them, which contained reference to Pilhofer, who must have been misunderstood, Lehner added, supposedly remarking 'that the Germans had to stay out there, and so forth...'

<sup>121</sup> 21.5.1932 Johann Flierl to Christian Keyßer, UELCA, NG Special, Flierl SR - documents and letters. Flierl was quoting Eppelein, and sent a book to Keyßer and Eppelein in response, written by an American-German Lutheran, Gottlieb C. Berkemeier, who had been at the Neuendettelsauer seminary



Johann Flierl's response tried to point out to Neuendettelsau that such resentments only generated counter-resentments, and widened the rift that had been opening between German and American Lutherans:

Welche Indignation musz es ausloesen, wenn so "weite Kreise" in der alten Heimat den Freunden in der Neuen Welt zumuten wollen nicht etwa aus Liebe zu des Herren Werk fuer die Mission zu opfern, sondern gleichsam Buszgeld zahlen zu sollen an Neuendettelsau von wegen der "Verbrechen" ihrer Regierung: wofuer Dank & Liebe ihnen natuerlich nicht zukomme.<sup>122</sup>

What indignation will it provoke, when "wide circles" in the old home[land] expect the friends in the New World not to sacrifice for the mission because of love for the Lord's work, but to pay some kind of monetary penance to Neuendettelsau because of the "crimes" of their government: for which gratitude and love of course are not owed them.

Flierl warned Eppelein not to expect any assistance from the Americans in the future:

Und wenn Euch etwa die uebernommene Last zu schwer wird, so gebt Euch ja nicht der truegerischen Hoffnung hin, dass Ihr beliebig zu irgend einer Z[ei]t den Amerikanern ein paar Stationen wieder zureuckgeben koennt, wie Du im letzten Brief an mich meintest.<sup>123</sup>

And when the burdens you took over become too heavy, then do not harbour a deceptive hope that you could arbitrarily at any time give some stations back to the Americans, as you reckoned in your last letter to me.

The transnational collaboration of Lutherans had turned out to be an interim solution, a compromise, which had been bearable only as long as the better option—sole control of the mission by German Lutherans—was unachievable. Increasing hostility to America, and the American Lutherans, permeated Neuendettelsau. Yet this feeling was not shared by many of the German missionaries in the field. Working closely with American colleagues, they had developed friendships across national divides. In the colony those aspects which separated them had been balanced out by others that united them. They were fellow missionaries, fellow Lutherans, white men out in New Guinea separated from other white settlers by their specific mission.

The Lutheran partnership across national boundaries had not started with the Brisbane agreements, but had been a lived reality. Time spent in Australia for training, recreation and other purposes had led to some intimate connections between German and Australian Lutherans. Stephan Lehner, for example, recently widowed after more than two and a half decades of marriage, was through his Australian born wife Klementine

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with Johann Flierl. Berkemeier's book, Flierl wrote, would show Neuendettelsau that Americans suffered, too, during WWI.

122 21.5.1932 Johann Flierl to Christian Keyßer, UELCA, NG Special, Flierl SR - documents and letters. Flierl pointed out to Eppelein (23.5.1932 Johann Flierl to Eppelein, UELCA, NG Special, Flierl SR - documents and letters) that what these 'wider circles' according to Eppelein said, and what Dr Doerfler had written was 'war-psychosis of the post war years, a serious disease infecting the soul of the German people, even Christian circles', and was deeply to be deplored. Flierl voiced confidence that this was not Eppelein's personal opinion, and encouraged him to publish articles in the *Freimund* fighting this spirit.

123 21.5.1932 Johann Flierl to Christian Keyßer, UELCA, NG Special, Flierl SR - documents and letters.

nee Döhler<sup>124</sup> connected to a clerical dynasty of the UELCA. Wilhem Flierl's mother was likewise from a large Australian Lutheran family. Some young male Australian lay workers had family members who had been trained in Neuendettelsau, and even some of the American Lutheran missionaries were descendants of former Neuendettelsauer seminarians. The Flierl family was one of those who had links with all three Lutheran partners.<sup>125</sup> Thus the imminent separation of the Lutheran Mission New Guinea posed a seemingly unsolvable personal dilemma for Wilhelm Flierl. Approached in late 1931 by Friedrich Braun from the ALC,<sup>126</sup> Flierl was asked to make a choice about where and for whom he would be working after January 1933—the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen or the Lutheran Mission Madang. Flierl waited until his time as sub-superintendent (*Praeses*) for the Finschhafen mission field had ended before answering Braun. His personal working life, Flierl replied, had started off in the employ of Neuendettelsau where he had also been educated. Interned during WWI and unable to return to New Guinea for some years, he had been taken in by America as a minister in 1923, and sent out to the New Guinea mission field in 1927 explicitly as a member of that church. Thus in 1929, when spheres of interest had been set up, Flierl had refrained from voicing a preference, but had left the decision of his placing to the main conference and missionary need. Flierl pointed out that the imminent separation of the mission caused him more than ever before to refuse to make a choice:

Ich möchte durch eigene Entscheidung keine Lösung herbeiführen, die mir gleich schmerzlich wäre, nach welcher Seite hin sie auch erfolgt. Ich möchte dies um so weniger tun, als es im gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt sozusagen einen Bekenntnisakt bedeuten würde. Einen solchen kann ich nicht vollziehen, weil es mir unmöglich ist, mich innerlich auf eine Seite zu stellen, nachdem ich überzeugt bin, dass man sich in beiden Lagern, wenn auch in verschiedener Richtung, schuldig gemacht hat an einer Entwicklung der Dinge, von der ich nicht glauben kann, dass sie gottgewollt ist.<sup>127</sup>

I do not want to create a separation by making a decision myself, which would be equally painful for me whichever side were chosen. I even less so want to do this, as this would mean an act of avowal, so to speak, at the present time. Such a choice I cannot make, because it is impossible for me to place myself inwardly on one side, seeing that I am convinced, that in both camps one has become guilty, even though in different ways, by participating in a development which I cannot believe is willed by God.

<sup>124</sup> Klementine Lehner, nee Döhler died on 15 June 1931. Pastor Ludwig Döhler was, for example, Lehner's brother-in-law. In 1933 Lehner married Sophie Deguisne, an American Lutheran nurse who had worked in New Guinea since 1922.

<sup>125</sup> Wilhelm Flierl's father, Johann Flierl, trained in Neuendettelsau, and had worked for Australian Lutherans before departing to New Guinea and founding the Finschhafen Mission; his mother, Louise Auricht, was Australian-born. Wilhelm was born in New Guinea, trained in Neuendettelsau, worked in New Guinea just before WWI; after internment in Australia (1915-1920) he worked as parish pastor in USA (1922-1927), before returning to New Guinea.

<sup>126</sup> Flierl responded to a letter by Braun from 9.10.1931.

<sup>127</sup> 18.2.1932 W. Flierl to F. Braun, ALC NG LMF 53/13. Flierl further stated: 'Ich möchte aber ausdrücklich betonen, dass es mich tief schmerzen würde, wenn durch meine Zugehörigkeit zu Dettelsau das Band, das mich mit Ihrer Kirche verbindet, Ihrerseits als zerschnitten angesehen werden sollte.'

For Flierl there was no pragmatic solution possible, as the separation went against his personal history of shared loyalties and his religious convictions about ecumenical connections based on these.

Lehner shared Flierl's beliefs, and he tried to reason with Eppelein that Neuendettelsau had responded to the German crisis with the wrong solution. Under the present circumstances, Lehner argued, Lutheran collaboration was not only possible, but invaluable, and right from a religious point of view:

Der Gedanke, dasz künftighin das einheitliche Werk, in dem bisher in schöner Harmonie gearbeitet wurde, getrennt werden soll, ist mir furchtbar. Ja nachdem ich das von Ihnen, sehr geehrter Herr Direktor, gesandte Buch 'Mutter oder Genossin'<sup>128</sup> das grell die schauerliche Lage Deutschlands be-leuchtet, gelesen habe, ist mir der Vorschlag un-fasslich. In solchen Zeiten sollte man Gott auf Knien danken für treue Freunde, Mitarbeiter, Brüder, die sich seit ihrer Mitarbeit hier so treu im Dienst erzeigten. 'Auf dasz sie eins seien' vor allem die, die Zweige eines Stammes sind, auf einem Bekenntnisgrund stehen.<sup>129</sup>

The thought that in the future the unified organisation will be separated, in which up to now work was carried out harmoniously, is terrible for me. After I read the book 'mother or comrade' you, dear director, sent, which glaringly illuminates the terrible situation in Germany, this recommendation remains incomprehensible to me. In such times one should thank God on one's knees for true friends, co-workers, brothers, which since their collaboration started have shown themselves so true in their service. 'So that they shall be one', especially those, who are branches of one trunk, and stand on the foundation of the same doctrines.

The members of the Neuendettelsauer mission in Germany insisted, and the Lutherans in Australia and New Guinea could do nothing but agree, that the crisis caused by the Depression and the disintegration of the Weimar Republic affected the work of the Neuendettelsauer mission in Germany and abroad, and needed to be addressed. Yet the solutions differed, ranging from the society's decision at home to pander to German nationalism, to the senior German field staff's appeals to increase and tighten transnational Lutheran co-operation in New Guinea. Both directions were based on a mixture of pragmatism, fundamental beliefs, and deep emotions.

The leading men in Australia and New Guinea were surprised and disturbed by the new developments the society in Germany demanded, and the uncompromising style it displayed to achieve its aims. During Eppelein's visit to the field in 1929 the new director had shown great care listening to the Jabim missionaries reservations and emotional upset in regard to Pilhofer's lingua franca model. Eppelein was prepared then to sacrifice, or at least postpone, steps towards the realisation of a united Papuan church and people for the sake of unity amongst the missionaries. Two years later no argument

<sup>128</sup> Hans Schemm, *Der rote Krieg. Mutter oder Genossin*, Nationalsozialistischen Kulturverlag Bayreuth 1931. The publishing house had been founded by Schemm in July 1931. See web page by Markus Barnick, Wer ist wer in Bayreuth? 'Hans Schemm', <http://www.bnbt.de/~tr1035/bt/wer/index.htm>.

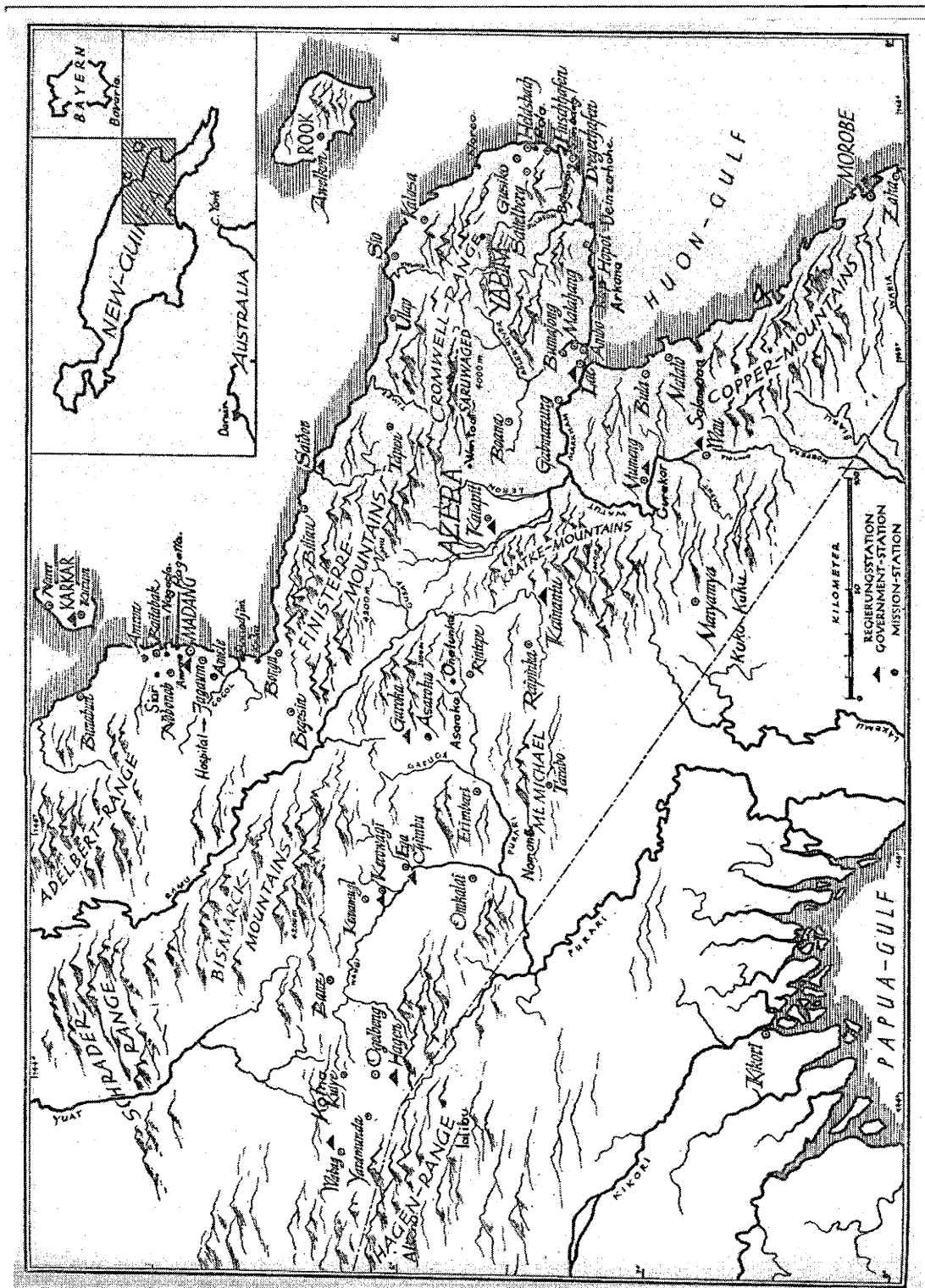
<sup>129</sup> 6.2.1932 Stefan Lehner to Eppelein, ND 53/12.

could reach him and persuade him to postpone his plans for a separation of the field. Had the director not seen the fragile and precarious position of Germans in the Mandated Territory during his visit? Had he not met the Administrator, even if only briefly? Had he not heard how difficult it had been for Theile to negotiate even slight structural changes with the Australian government? And had he not understood the chances for the future Lutheran transnational co-operation and a greater united mission field offered? The leading men abroad, such as Lehner, Wilhelm Flierl and Theile, pointed out the risks and dangers involved in placing the Lutheran Mission in Finschhafen under sole German control, and voiced their grief over abandoning collegial ties with the men and women from America they had been working with for a decade. Unable to fully comprehend the changes which had occurred in Germany and the emotions generated there they tried to make sense of the decisions affecting their future and that of the indigenous people entrusted to them. They understood that the director was putting German concerns ahead of the mission field and its needs. They saw control and decision-making powers removed from the field, and placed back with the society in Neuendettelsau. And they concluded that the director did not care and did not listen. The decision to make the Lutheran Mission a solely German one revived tensions between missionaries in the field about the future direction of language and mission policies, which Eppelein had smoothed over in 1929. An atmosphere of resentment and distrust towards the German mother society and its leadership grew and spread in New Guinea, which would erupt in the mid- and late 1930s with unexpected, devastating consequences.

From a German point of view the rise of nationalism at home was the expression of a crisis as well as the beginning of new opportunities. The imminent collapse of the Weimar Republic had the potential to bring in a new political order better than democracy, which would respect religious values and facilitate a moral and spiritual renewal of the German people. Here was a chance for the Neuendettelsauer society to do successful *Volksmission*, and influence the wider public and the new political leaders. Positioning the society on the side of the new and promising nationalistic forces, particularly the National Socialists, made it necessary to disentangle the mission field from transnational co-operative control. This was not only a necessity and a risk, but also a chance. Within the heated climate of rising nationalism it could just be possible that supporters of the mission could be enticed to increase their donations, and allow the Neuendettelsauer society to regain sole control of the mission it had founded.

The rise of nationalism had reignited resentments in Germany towards the victors of the war, especially Americans, and despite all personal and organisational connections of the past, many leading men of the Neuendettelsauer society shared this resentment, and despised the political, social and cultural attitudes represented by Americans, Lutheran or not. It was felt in Neuendettelsau that the fact that the society was locked into a partnership with Americans and did not have a foreign mission field of its own impeded the society's prospect of attracting donations, for which other societies, such as the Leipziger Mission, competed in Bavaria. If Neuendettelsau managed to get its one and only mission field back under its sole control, so the argument went, Neuendettelsau's reputation would be strengthened, and all other areas of work would benefit, such as the *Volksmission* and the Diaspora work. Calling for a separation of the mission field was in a way a gamble by the Neuendettelsauer Mission under Epplein's leadership to bring both its *Volksmission* and its foreign mission to new heights. Epplein repositioned the Neuendettelsauer Mission at home and abroad to enable it to expand, not so much in response to the German crisis, as in anticipation of its resolution. Moving the society from a position of political commentator into the role of aspiring political advisor to a new German government, Neuendettelsau was ready to take on this new role when the Weimar Republic ended, and it assumed that its voice, support and advice would be welcomed by the new rulers of Germany.

## Map 2: Huon Peninsula



Source: Jericho, E. A., *Seedtime and Harvest in New Guinea*, Adelaide, New Guinea Mission Board, U.E.L.C.A., 1961.

**IV**

**1933**

## National Socialism in Government

Lord God, send the leader who reverses our sorrow with mighty command.

*Herr Gott, den Führer sende, der unsern Kummer wende mit mächtigem Gebot.*

(*Freimund* 30.6.1932)<sup>1</sup>

1932 was another turbulent year in Germany. March and April were dominated by the elections for the Reich's president. With the support of the Catholic Zentrum Party and the Social Democrats Hindenburg, 83 years of age, won 53 per cent of the votes. The Communist party's candidate, Ernst Thälmann, managed to gain only 10.2 per cent of the votes, while Adolf Hitler secured 36.8 per cent. The National Socialists' change of direction in 1931 had paid off. Toning down more radical aspects such as agrarian reform, and emphasising their concept of 'positive Christianity', they gave the supporters of conservative Christian parties the confidence to switch to the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The NSDAP became a respectable option on the right. Christian Keyßer wrote to Stolz in March 1932 about the elections for the German President:

Ich habe mich für Hitler entschieden. Er ist zweifellos ernster, gemessener, auch christlicher geworden. Wir brauchen eine junge Kraft, die unseren deutschen Saustall ausmistet.<sup>2</sup>

I have decided [to vote] for Hitler. He has undoubtedly become more serious, more measured, and also more Christian. We need a young power to clean out our German pigsty.

Eppelein's advice to readers of the *Freimund* on how Christians should behave during, and vote in, the elections drew a slightly wider boundary interspersed with some criticism of parts of the NSDAP. His article 'church and politics' reiterated the argument, so often stated in the *Freimund* before elections that the church and its employees should keep a distance from worldly politics, especially party politics. There should be, for example, no party insignia in church buildings or graveyards. A slight softening of Neuendettelsau's earlier position on party neutrality can be found in some of the formulations, such as that employees of the church should *preferably* ('moeglichst') refrain from any party political activity. Yet, Eppelein continued, the church had to speak up against irreligious or immoral ideologies. Christians thus had to

<sup>1</sup> 30.6.1932 *Freimund* No. 26, p. 214. The song with words by the poet Ernst Leibl was a well known religious song. The full verse reads:

Wir heben unsre Hände  
Aus tiefster, bitter Not:  
Herr Gott den Führer sende,  
Der unsern Kummer wende  
Mit mächtigem Gebot.

We raise our hands  
With deepest, bitter distress:  
Lord God, send the leader  
Who reverses our sorrow  
With mighty command.

<sup>2</sup> 9.3.1932 Keyßer to J.J. Stolz, UELCA-NG correspondence: ND-Stolz 1924-1934.



reject Communism, Fascism (insofar as it preached racial supremacy instead of God's supremacy), and Americanism, meaning amoral and egotistic culture. Outside the border no Protestant Christian should cross were freethinkers within the *SPD*, Jesuitism and Ultramontanism<sup>3</sup>, as well as such racial supremacists as Rosenberg in the *NSDAP* and the *Tannenbergbund* as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

The rise of the *NSDAP* in the many state and federal elections of 1932, a year marked by social and political instability under the short-lived governments of Franz von Papen (1 Jun 1932 - 2 Dec 1932) and Kurt von Schleicher (2 Dec 1932 - 30 Jan 1933), was followed by the *Freimund* with some ambivalence. With rising unemployment and cuts in public welfare, the *Freimund* gloomily warned, many people would drift towards Communism, and a strong Christian leader was needed to unite the people and liberate Germany. The *Freimund* announced, that 'unbiblical Democracy, which cares only about numbers and masses, but not about quality and true abilities must finally lead to the ruin of the German people. The German *Volk* needs strong leadership.'<sup>5</sup> Yet frequent street fighting between Communists and National Socialists<sup>6</sup> raised doubts about the Nazi's standards and methods, and outbursts and public statements of the 'pro-Germanic' and 'anti-Christian' wing were disturbing reminders that 'positive Christianity' might not be or remain the dominant trend within the party.<sup>7</sup>

The seminarians in Neuendettelsau had been following the political developments closely, and were using their *Concordia* meetings, the seminarians' club, to debate not

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<sup>3</sup> These were mentioned as examples for egotistical 'Americanism'. The comment was directed mainly against the *Zentrum*.

<sup>4</sup> Eppelein, *Kirche und Politik*, in *Freimund* No. 16, 21.4.1932, pp. 129-136. Other advice on what party to support led to protest by a politician, who felt his party had been misrepresented. *Freimund* No. 7, 16.2.1933 (pp. 52-59) published an article Lauerer, the director of the *Diakonie*, had given to the deaconesses in Neuendettelsau, entitled 'Weltanschauung und Politik', an overview of ideologies of the main parties. One leading member of the Christlicher Volksdienst, Major Stelzer, was so enraged with the summary of his party, that he published an open letter against Lauerer in 25.2.1933 No. 8 of the Party's Journal *Der Christliche Volksdienst, Organ des christlichen Volksdienstes in Bayern*. Lauerer published a short general apology in *Freimund* No 9, 2.3.1933, p. 95).

<sup>5</sup> 19.1.1933 *Freimund* No 3, p. 27. Superintendent Stephan Lehner informed the mission staff in New Guinea in a circular, that 'the political situation has become more serious ... The Communists have gained 40 seats in addition to those they already held during the last elections. This of course has repercussions for the mission.' 29.11.1932 Circular, ND 53/12/ Feldleitung Stefan Lehner.

<sup>6</sup> The fights in the streets mainly between members of the *NSDAP* and *KPD* culminated in the '*Altonaer Blutsonntag*' (bloody Sunday in Altona) on 17.7.1932; see for example Broszat, *Die Machtergreifung*, p. 229. In addition Hitler's reluctance to join the government unless as chancellor led to an internal rift in the *NSDAP*. On 8.12.1932, six days after Schleicher became chancellor, Strasser resigned from all *NSDAP* party positions. The internal crisis the party was plunged into also undermined public confidence in the *NSDAP*. See for example Broszat, *Die Machtergreifung*, p. 231.

<sup>7</sup> see for example 9.6.1932 *Freimund* No 23, p. 19; 30.6.1932 *Freimund* No 26 pp. 214-15; 19.1.1933 *Freimund* No 3, p. 24.

only cultural and religious themes, but also some of the more controversial political-ideological developments. Ernst Ballbach, a self confessed National Socialist, gave talks on the NSDAP's party programme and Hitler's character, Leonhard Goetzmann summarized Rosenberg's book *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (The Myth of the 20th Century), and Michael Bär presented an introduction to Hans Hauptmann's book *Jesus der Arier* (Jesus, the Arian).<sup>8</sup> The seminarians debated and disagreed with each other. Keyßer, one of their main teachers, supported the somewhat passionate and heated atmosphere of political debate that filled the seminary, whereas in the past the institution had prided itself on solid theological education through control and censorship. Keyßer explained to J.J. Stolz, president of the Australian Lutherans and ex-seminarian of Neuendettelsau, that the pupils in Neuendettelsau were 'standing in the middle of fabulously fermenting times' (*fabelhaft gaerende Zeit*).

Euere wohlbehüteten Schäflein stehen doch in Eurem Adelaide Seminar nicht im gewaltigen Geisteskampf drin wie unsere Leute! Dabei ist Dettelsau noch ruhig und abgelegen. Aber was wird alles gedruckt! Was für Strömungen reissen die Leute hin und her! Es ist doch nicht mehr entfernt so wie zu unserer Zeit, wo die beiden Deinzer gewisse theol. Bücher von uns und vom Missionshaus ferngehalten haben.

Your well-protected flock in your Adelaide Seminary are not in a mighty spiritual struggle like our people! And this despite [Neuen]dettelsau being quiet and remote. But what kind of things get printed! What ideas rip people to and fro! It is not remotely like it was during our time, when the two Deinzer<sup>9</sup> kept certain theological books away from us and the mission house.

Keyßer defended Neuendettelsau's new openness towards political debate, as it was Neuendettelsau's aim to 'educate the people to think and judge independently'. This was important as they would be sent abroad 'to be independent pastors or missionaries'. Opposing opinions were welcome, as long as seminarians 'respected and recognised the superiority of the teacher'.<sup>10</sup>

On 30 January 1933 Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler as chancellor within a coalition of members of the Deutschnationale under Hugenberg, and other nationalistic partners, like the Stahlhelm. The *Freimund* reported that in Berlin there had not been an atmosphere like this 'since the days of August in 1914', but that one had to wait whether this was really a God-given new rise of the German people or only 'a beautiful

<sup>8</sup> ND 31/46-5 Concordia protocol book 7: No 849, 20.6.1931 Talk by Ballbach on NSDAP; No 852, 10.10. 1931 Talk by Ballbach on Hitler's character; No 856 Talk by Goetzmann; No 861, 1.10.1932 Talk by Bär.

<sup>9</sup> Johannes and Martin Deinzer.

<sup>10</sup> 7.3.1932 Keyßer to Stolz, UELCA-NG correspondence: ND-Stolz 1924-1934.

dream'.<sup>11</sup> On 1 February the Reichstag was dissolved, and new elections were announced for 5 March 1933.<sup>12</sup>

During February and March 1933, in the weeks leading up to the Reichstag-elections, passions soared. The Seminary chronicle, written then by Seminarian Konrad Munsel, stated that 'like almost everywhere talk in the mission house is at present political'.<sup>13</sup> The outside world and the political struggle streamed into the sleepy village and the quiet and traditional mission buildings. On 1 March a radio receiver was placed in the dining hall where the only slogan given space before had been a bible quotation written on the wall, reminding the seminarians of Neuendettelsau's history, tradition and aims:

Lass dein Brot übers Wasser fahren, so wirst du es finden nach langer Zeit. <sup>14</sup>	Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.
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The Seminary chronicle recorded the tensions and anticipation of the last days before the election.

Seit dem 1. März sitzen wir Abend für Abend am Radio und hören die Wahlreden unseres Führers. Heute, am 4 März war der letzte Appell vor dem großen Tag ... Ergreifend war der Schluß der Ein- führung in Königsberg; als Ausklang des ganzen läuteten die Domglocken über das ganze Deutsche Land. <sup>15</sup>	Since March 1 we have sat evening after evening in front of the radio and listened to the election speeches of our leader. Today, on 4 March was the last roll call before the big day... The conclusion of the inauguration in Königsberg was moving; as the final sounds of it all the bells of the cathedral rang over the whole of the German country.
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Hitler's speech in Königsberg was received by Lutherans in Germany in general as confirmation that Hitler was placing himself firmly within a Christian tradition. Neuendettelsau was no exception. The *Freimund* published excerpts from Hitler's pre-election speech under the headline:

Der Herr ist Gott! Der Herr ist Gott! Gebt unserm Gott die Ehre! <sup>16</sup>	The Lord is God! The Lord is God! Give honour to our God!
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<sup>11</sup> *Freimund* No. 5, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> *Freimund* No.7, 16.2.1933 published both Reichspräsident Hindenburg's short declaration of 1 February (p. 62) and the government's joint declaration signed by Hitler, von Papen, Hugenberg, and all other ministers of 2 February (pp. 60-62). The declaration started with a summary of the end of WWI and Weimar/epoch-categorisation:

Ueber 14 Jahre sind vergangen seit dem unseligen Tage, da, von innerer und äußeren Versprechungen verblendet, das deutsche Volk der höchsten Güter unserer Vergangenheit des Reiches, seiner Ehre und seiner Freiheit vergaß und dabei alles verlor. Seit diesen Tagen des Verrats hat der Allmächtige unserem Volk seinen Segen entzogen.	Over 14 years have gone by since the disastrous day, when, blinded by promises from at home and abroad, the German people forgot the highest goods of our <i>Reich's</i> past, its honour and its freedom, and thus lost everything. Since this day of betrayal the Almighty has withdrawn his blessings from our people.
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<sup>13</sup> Chronikbuch 1933 ND 31/1b-4.

<sup>14</sup> Qohelet 11, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Chronikbuch 1933 ND 31/1b-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Freimund* No. 10 pp. 97f. The text is part of a famous Lutheran church song *Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut* by Johann Jakob Schütz (1673). The quote would have reminded readers of the whole song,

The speech in Königsberg was the highpoint of an eight week-long, conscious move by Hitler and the NSDAP ‘into the churches’. The bells, however, did not ring over Königsberg, as the parish pastor refused to have them rung. The Nazis had the bell ringing re-played on tape for the radio transmission.<sup>17</sup> The elections in March were portrayed in speeches by Hitler and other National Socialists as potentially a historic watershed, the beginning of a new era for Germany. Several times before the elections the *Freimund* picked up this theme, and compared 1918 to 1933. The emphasis was on the failure in 1918 to seize the historic opportunity to create a new political order which would lead Germany out of its predicaments—instead the Weimar Republic was created. In March 1933 Germany had a second chance for a re-birth of the nation.<sup>18</sup>

On 5 March the election results were published. The NSDAP had won 288 of 647 seats. Together with its conservative coalition partners it would form the new government. Munsel was enthusiastic. Underneath the last entry of the year 1932 and before the page on which the year 1933 started he inserted:

Adolf Hitler wird Kanzler  
des deutschen Volkes u. Reiches.  
Heil!<sup>19</sup>

Adolf Hitler has become chancellor  
of the German people and Reich.  
Heil!

Munsel’s delight in the outcome of the elections was shared by Director Eppelein, who, however, showed less youthful enthusiasm and more experienced pragmatism. Eppelein also celebrated not only the victory of Hitler, but that of a coalition of several conservative, nationalistic parties:

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which Lutherans knew by heart. The song talks about calling to God in your sorrow, and he will help, and that everything will work out, if you only put your sole trust in God; the song also contains the lines:

Der Herr ist noch und nimmer nicht  
Von seinem Volk geschieden,  
Er bleibet ihre Zuversicht,  
Ihr Segen, Heil und Frieden.

The Lord is not now and never  
Separated from his Volk  
He remains its confidence  
Its blessing, salvation and peace.

Underneath the excerpts of the Hitler speech a poem by Georg Stämmeler (alias for Ernst Krauß) was placed. Stämmeler was a poet and play writer, who was after WWI especially influential amongst members of the *Bündische Jugend*. Today he is less well known. Selected words of wisdom and poems by Stämmeler can be found on web pages, amongst them several Neo-Nazi web pages. See for example <http://www.jugend-wacht.de/>; [http://heimatschutz.org:16080/kulturkammer/erste\\_feier\\_sw\\_ssw01.htm](http://heimatschutz.org:16080/kulturkammer/erste_feier_sw_ssw01.htm).

<sup>17</sup> See Scholder pp. 281-285.

<sup>18</sup> The election results were published in the *Freimund* in great detail together with voter numbers for the two previous elections, 31.7.1932, and 6.11.1932, proceeded by an overview of the results of all elections of the Reichstag since 1919. By spanning the whole of the Weimar republic in its publication of the election results the *Freimund* showed that the March elections were indeed the beginning of a new chapter in Germany’s history. The Weimar Republic was over. See *Freimund* No. 11, pp. 99-100, and *Freimund* No. 10, p. 97. See also Scholder p. 293.

<sup>19</sup> Chronikbuch 1933 ND 31/1b-4. It is my guess that the lines were inserted after the March elections, but it is also possible that they were written in response to January 1933.

wir sind jetzt recht erfreut, daß wir eine nationale Regierung bekommen haben die auch im Reichstag die absolute Mehrheit hat. Möge Gott uns helfen, daß es wieder vorwärts und aufwärts geht im deutschen Vaterland. Solcher Aufstieg könnte auch für unser teures Missionswerk von Segen sein.<sup>20</sup>

we are now quite delighted that we got a nationalistic government which also holds an absolute majority in parliament. May God help us that things will move forward and upward in the German Fatherland. Such a rise might also be a blessing for our dear mission organisation.

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<sup>20</sup> 9.3.1933 Eppelein to Johann Flierl, ND 52/21-5 J. Flierl. The coalition included for example Hugenberg and the German Nationalist Party, the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP): Hugenberg, however, left the coalition a few months later. See for example Scholder pp. 278f, 285.

## Asserting the Mission - Defending the Nation

In April 1933 the *Freimund* took the opportunity of Hitler's birthday to assert its support for the new ruler by printing a special birthday hymn, written and composed by Christian Keyßer<sup>21</sup>.

Ein Ruf erscholl, als wir in Not und Sorgen  
Am Boden lagen, drohnend durch die Nacht:  
Du deutsches Volk erwache endlich, es wird Morgen;  
Der Tag bricht an, der Freiheit und der Macht!

Es ist ein Fuehrer uns von Gott gegeben;  
Er stuermt voran, wir folgen treu gesinnt.  
Es geht durch Nacht und Tod hindurch zu Licht und Leben;  
Es wird nicht Ruhe, bis wir Sieger sind.

Das Volk erwacht, die Ketten krachend brechen;  
Der Jubel braust, er fegt die Gassen blank.  
O Deutschland, aller Herzen sollen einig sprechen:  
Herr Gott im Himmel, Dir sei ewig Dank!

A call sounded, when we distressed and worried  
Lay on the ground, it boomed through the night:  
You German people finally wake up, it's dawning;  
The day starts, of freedom and of might!

A leader has been given us by God;  
He storms ahead, we follow faithfully.  
It goes through night and death to light and life;  
There'll be no rest, until we are the winners.

The people wake, the chains burst crashingly  
The jubilations roar, and sweep the streets.  
O Germany, all hearts shall say as one:  
Lord God in Heaven, eternal thanks to Thee.

The song was described as a song for everybody and every occasion, a Folksong, Marching-song and a song for Youth. Together with birthday wishes from the whole village it had been sent to Hitler on 17 April, asking him to accept and authorize the song.<sup>22</sup> Both the sending and the printing of the song and the accompanying congratulations exemplified the new unity the song called for: the whole community of Neuendettelsau united to wish the Fuehrer happy birthday. The representatives within the community selected to act for the village for this occasion were the two mission directors, Eppelein for the foreign mission, and Lauerer for the inner mission, Kolb, Neuendettelsau's mayor, Herbert Boeck, the leader of the S.A. and Mich(ael?) Deuer, the leader of the Stahlhelm, the right wing organisation of the German front-line soldiers<sup>23</sup>.

21 *Freimund* Jg 79, 20.4.1933, No. 16 p. 158. Keyßer had written and composed songs before, especially in local New Guinean languages.

22 see 18.4.1933 Eppelein to Unger, ND 13/1. Hitler's reply fell short of these expectations. A brief standardised thank you letter from Hitler was sent to Keyßer, who handed it on to the village council. The council gave it back and recommended that the letter be published in the *Freimund*, which it was (p. 207), following on from Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on 17.5.1933 published on pp. 202-206:

Der Herr Reichskanzler hat auf den Glückwunsch der Gemeinde Neuendettelsau zu seinem Geburtstag (siehe *Freimund* Nr. 16) folgende Antwort erteilt: Adolf Hitler - Für die mir anlässlich meines Geburtstages erwiesenen Aufmerksamkeiten spreche ich Ihnen meinen besten Dank aus. 20. April 1933. Adolf Hitler

The Reich's Chancellour has given the following reply to the birthday gratulations of the community Neuendettelsau (see *Freimund* No. 16): Adolf Hitler - I'd like to kindly thank you for the attention given me on the occasion of my birthday. 20. April 1933. Adolf Hitler

See 19.5.1933 Gemeinderat Neuendettelsau to Missionsinspektor Dr. Christian Keyßer, ND 28/1.

23 The *Stahlhelm* (steel helmet), was founded in 1918 as the German frontline soldiers' organisation. It railed against the Treaty of Versailles and the Young plan, and was integrated into the SA in 1934 as the *NS-Frontkämpferbund*, and dissolved a year later. See for example <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/weimar/gewalt/stahlhelm/>.

The order in which the signatures were placed put the mission first. The birthday congratulations thus also symbolised and realised at the same time the role Eppelein had put to Schemm in 1931; a role the Neuendettelsauer mission continued to seek for itself: to be a spiritual guide in the renewal of the German people, a source of expertise on unifying peoples available to political leaders.

Eppelein used this opportunity to offer 1000 copies of the April *Freimund* to the Bayreuth group, suggesting that they could be used for a special promotion, either given away free or at a cheaper price, to find new readers for the mission journal.<sup>24</sup> Genuine enthusiasm for the new political leadership and a keen eye for self-promotion went hand in hand with a genuine belief in the value of what Neuendettelsau had to offer.

While the Neuendettelsauer Mission celebrated the Fuehrer's first birthday in power, and at the same time endeavoured to mend bridges with the National Socialist leader Hans Schemm in regard to the Lossin affair (which had flared up again since the National Socialists had come to power), the national socialist daily newspaper *Fränkisches Volk*,<sup>25</sup> edited by Schemm, took offence at a remark in the March edition of the *Freimund*<sup>26</sup> and published an attack on director Eppelein:

Unerhörte Entgleisung eines bayerischen evangelischen Missionsdirektors ... Schläft Dr. Eppelein? Wir alle glauben, das der Tag für Deutschland nun angebrochen ist, und er stellt fest: 'Es ist wohl letzte Minute vor 12 Uhr.' Solcher Satz ist nicht nur töricht, blind, er ist geradezu gefährlich.<sup>27</sup>

Unheard-of lapse of a Bavarian protestant mission director ... Does Dr Eppelein sleep? We all believe that the day for Germany has now dawned, and he states: 'It is the last minute before 12 o'clock.' Such a sentence is not only stupid, blind, it is downright dangerous.

The Neuendettelsauer lay-mission support group in Bayreuth wrote a defence of Eppelein, which the newspaper's editorial office promised would be printed in one of the next issues.<sup>28</sup> The statement detailed pro-National Socialist sections published by Eppelein as the editor of the *Freimund* during the first months of 1933, and pointed to one example, where the *Fränkisches Volk* had abbreviated a particular Hitler speech, while the *Freimund* had given the full text. The criticism by the *Fränkisches Volk* was

24 18.4.1933 Eppelein to Unger, ND 13/1.

25 The *Fränkisches Volk*, a daily newspaper produced by the National Socialist NS-Kulturverlag in Bayreuth, which also published several other journals, was first published in October 1932 with 10 000 copies. For more information see Markus Barnick, Wer ist wer in Bayreuth? 'Hans Schemm', <http://www.bnbt.de/~tr1035/bt/wer/index.htm>.

26 *Freimund* 5.3.1933 - see Lebenserinnerungen Friedrich Eppelein, Vol. IIB, p. 413. Eppelein mentions 'Ein Wort der Schriftleitung zur heutigen Lage' in *Freimund* No. 11, 16.3.1933, pp. 101-103.

27 21.4.1933 *Fränkisches Volk*, Nationalsozialistische Tageszeitung Nr.93 published in Bayreuth, copy in ND 22/5.

28 28.4.1933 Emil Unger to Friedrich Eppelein, ND 16/31-33.

not only outrageous, but grossly misrepresented Eppelein's intentions in the specific article:

Als evang. Christ und überzeugter Nationalsozialist habe ich mich gerade auch an diesem Artikel herzlich gefreut, weil ich in ihm das deutliche Bemühen Dr. Eppeleins abspürte, gerade auch die Kreise zur freudigen Mitarbeit an der neuen vaterländischen Bewegung zu ermuntern, die sich um der Mängel und Unvollkommenheiten willen bisher von derselben fern gehalten haben.<sup>29</sup>

As a Protestant Christian and convinced (staunch) National Socialist I was delighted especially also about this article, as I felt the evident endeavour of Dr Eppelein, to encourage particularly those circles that have so far kept their distance because of shortcomings and imperfections [of the patriotic movement] to contribute joyously to the new patriotic movement.

The response was signed 'an old *Freimund* reader and National Socialist'. When after one week nothing had happened, a representative of the Bayreuth group, Emil Unger, told Eppelein that they would try to have the statement printed in another local newspaper. Unger wrote that they were promised by the editorial office in Bayreuth that the Nuernberg office would be asked to print the response. One member of the Bayreuth group, Unger explained to Eppelein, then tried to speak to Schemm in Munich, but did not manage to get to him. Unger suggested a response be published quickly in another local daily paper, the *Allgemeine Rundschau* and urged Eppelein to also publish a response in the *Freimund*. The matter was serious, especially if Schemm should be party to this attack.<sup>30</sup>

The article in the *Fränkisches Volk* brought long-standing tensions and undercurrents to the surface. While leading members of the Neuendettelsauer mission society supported a political, moral and religious reformation of Germany they thought the National Socialists were able to bring about, many of National Socialism's founders and followers were less than supportive of the society's main enterprise: the foreign mission. In regard to Christianity in Germany the party had made a tactical turn in the guise of 'positive Christianity', culminating in Hitler's symbolic actions on the day of Potsdam. On bringing Christianity to members of other races the NSDAP was either disinterested or openly hostile. Half a year earlier, attacks by National Socialists on foreign missions had reached a new and unprecedented level.

In September 1932 the Norddeutsche Mission Society, based in Bremen, organised a lecture tour by Pastor Robert Kwami, president of the Ewe-church in Togo. The National Socialists, who held an absolute majority in the local state parliament, tried to

<sup>29</sup> Draft, undated, ND 16/31-33.

<sup>30</sup> 28.4.1933 Unger to Eppelein, ND 16/31-33. The response was published in the *Allgemeine Rundschau*, Nuernberg-Zirndorf, 1/2 May 1933. See Mrožko, Kurt-Dietrich, *Mission und Drittes Reich*, p. 13.



stop Pastor Kwami from preaching in the Lambertikirche in Oldenburg, as this would amount to '*Kulturschande*', a cultural disgrace. Pastor Kwami was black. For wider church circles this event represented a test case for the relationship between church and state authorities.<sup>31</sup> For the German Protestant mission societies it cut to the heart. While the local church won the first battle, and Pastor Kwami spoke in the Lambertikirche, the state's National Socialist Prime Minister (Ministerpraesident) Carl Roever did not let the matter rest there, but continued attacks on Kwami and foreign missions. The local church authorised a sub-committee to draft a declaration, which was published in December 1932 in the journal *Evangelisches Deutschland*. This declaration, which was also re-printed in the *Freimund*<sup>32</sup>, was meant as a final word on the matter, but provoked a flood of other declarations and statements.<sup>33</sup> In response to these attacks and debates Eppelein contacted yet again Friedrich Klein, whose position as a fellow Lutheran pastor and National Socialist with influence, made him the ideal mediator for all matters to do with National Socialist politics. Eppelein was concerned that a rift was developing between National Socialism and the foreign mission. Mission circles had been alienated from the party by the recent events in Oldenburg, while National Socialist Christians taking their lead from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* were having 'here and there ... a rather adverse influence'<sup>34</sup> on support for mission work in congregations. Eppelein's strategy to address this situation was not to enter the debate himself, but to respond indirectly, for which he needed Klein's assistance. Eppelein chose his words very carefully, as what he suggested to Klein was somewhat of a backdoor deal, not far short of public deception, and certainly an incursion by himself as a non-party member into internal party politics. Eppelein explained to Klein that he had been urged several times to make a public statement about the events in Oldenburg:

Ich möchte dies nun auch um der Mission willen tun, aber in einer Form, welche auch nationalsozialistische Kreise nicht unnötig vor den Kopf stösst. Und darum möchte ich Sie herzlich darum bitten als national-sozialistischer Pfarrer eine positive Stellungnahme zur Mission zu bekunden. Am allerliebsten wäre mir, wenn ich außer einem Artikel von Ihnen noch einen aus der Feder eines anderen Herrn der innerhalb der NSDAP. eine gewisse autoritative Stellung hat durch Ihre Vermittlung bekommen koennte. Nicht unzweckmässig wäre es vielleicht, wenn diese Artikel zunächst im

I would now like to do this for the mission's sake, but in such a way that does not unnecessarily alienate National Socialist circles. That is why I would like to ask you kindly as a National Socialist pastor to make a positive statement about the [foreign] mission. What I would like best is, if I could in addition to an article by you get through your intercession another one penned by another gentlemen, who holds a certain authoritative position in the NSDAP. It would perhaps not be inexpedient if these articles were to be published first in the National Socialist Party's paper, and I

31 For details see for example Scholder, pp. 229ff. Of special importance is that the police informed the local pastor that Cabinet had decided that the event should not take place. In the end the minister for culture had to declare that the matter was not for him to decide, but for the leaders of the church.

32 *Freimund* No. 49, 8.12.1932, p. 405. 'Christlicher Glaube und Rassenforschung' by Ausschuss für Lehre und Bekenntnis des Oldenburgischen Generalpredigervereins.

33 For details see Scholder, pp. 231f.

34 3.2.1933 Eppelein an Klein, ND 22/5.

nationalsozialistischen Parteiblatt erscheinen würden und ich würde dann in unserem Freimund diese Presseäußerungen in einem nationalsozialistischen Parteiblatt (etwa in dem von Herrn Reichstagsabgeordneten Schemm) zum Abdruck bringen.<sup>35</sup>

would then reprint in our Freimund these newspaper comments of a National Socialist party newspaper (like for example that of the member of Parliament Schemm).

Eppelein's cautious, clumsy language betrays a sense of unease about his own proposition. His wordy assertions that such articles, especially if they were to appear in the newspaper *Fraenkisches Volk*, would be of benefit to the 'foreign mission as well as your party, to the church and the fatherland'<sup>36</sup>, seem to be a reassurance directed as much to himself as to Klein. Eppelein was stretching the task of *Volksmision* as a public commentator, facilitator, mediator and educator to include the engineering of political statements and the making of political directions.

Friedrich Klein responded the next day, thanking Eppelein for his friendly letter. Klein promised to write the article Eppelein suggested as soon as possible, probably in a fortnight's time, as he was busy preparing a small pamphlet for publication. He also offered 'with pleasure' to be available to write an article for the *Freimund*. He was not sure whether he could convince 'a leading personality from the party', but suggested the *Freimund* could reprint an article by a member of the Berlin Mission, published in the journal *Evangelium im Dritten Reich*, the gospel in the Third Reich.<sup>37</sup> This journal was the Sunday paper of the German Christians, a group representing National Socialists within the church.

Damit ist dieser Artikel eine Stimme aus NS Kreisen, die für Ihre Zwecke vielleicht sehr brauchbar ist.

Thus the article is a voice from NS circles, which might be very useful for your purposes.

Klein then volunteered some inside information on the events in Oldenburg<sup>38</sup>, which he asked Eppelein to treat confidentially. The National Socialist protests had focused

<sup>35</sup> 3.2.1933 Eppelein an Klein, ND 22/5.

<sup>36</sup> 3.2.1933 Eppelein an Klein, ND 22/5.

Es wäre damit der Mission sicherlich ein großer Dienst erwiesen, aber dabei in einer Form, daß nicht unnötig oder gar irrtümlich der Nationalsozialismus angegriffen wird. In einer Zeit wo sich die national gerichteten Kreise in erfreulicher Weise endlich die Hand gereicht haben, muß ja erst recht alles vermieden werden, was das Ansehen dieser nationalen Kreise antastet.

This would surely do a great service for the foreign mission, and in such a way as to not attack the National Socialists unnecessarily or erroneously. In such times when fortunately circles with national leaning have finally joined hands, more than ever everything has to be avoided that could undermine the reputation of these nationalistic circles.

<sup>37</sup> Artikel 'Das Recht des Volkstums nach den Erfahrungen der Mission' von Miss. Insp. D. Weichert in *Evangelium im Dritten Reich*, Nr. 8, 4.12.1932.

<sup>38</sup> On learning about the 'unedifying clash' Klein had immediately sent protests to the national leadership of the party, which in turn had dealt with the situation without delay and decisively. It was from these sources Klein drew his information.

solely on the ‘appearance of a Negro during church service’, and were never meant as attacks against the foreign mission in general. The escalation had been due to the behaviour of and conflicts within the church in Oldenburg, which also continued to reject and ridicule party officials’ attempts to initiate unofficial confidential talks. Elegantly turning Eppelein’s assertion that the National Socialists were the cause of the rift between party and mission upside down, Klein concluded with a rhetorical question:

Wundern Sie sich, wenn nun bei der NSDAP ein gewisses Misstrauen herrscht? <sup>39</sup>	Are you surprised that there is a certain level of distrust within the NSDAP now?
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Eppelein took up Klein’s suggestion of reprinting suitable articles. The May issue of the *Freimund* carried excerpts of a pamphlet *Mission and National Socialism* by Johannes Warneck, director of the Rheinische Mission, which had just been published.<sup>40</sup> And earlier in the April issue an article by Christian Keyßer was reprinted, which argued the importance of the foreign mission experiences for the *Volksmission* in Germany.<sup>41</sup> This answer by Neuendettelsau to the Oldenburg affair and increased hostilities against the foreign mission was introduced with a short editorial plea. Under the heading ‘to all friends of the mission’ the editors explained that as the New Guinea mission field was back under Neuendettelsau’s sole control more funding was needed. During the first three months of 1933, however, donations were down:

Wir bitten unsere lieben Missionsfreunde herzlich und dringend, auch um unseres Volkes willen diesem Gotteswerk auf Neuguinea die Treue zu halten und ihm neue Freunde zuzuführen. <sup>42</sup>	We ask our dear friends of the mission sincerely and urgently, also for the sake of our <i>Volk</i> , to stay true to this work of God in New Guinea and bring new friends to it.
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This tactic of defending the foreign mission in general and the Neuendettelsauer mission in particular by positively asserting patriotism, and connecting the foreign mission to Volk and Fatherland was pushed one step further when it came to defending the integrity of Neuendettelsau’s director and editor of the *Freimund*, Eppelein himself. Only loosely tying his comments to an article about church reform and a debate about a future National church, Eppelein explained in one and a half columns his commitment

<sup>39</sup> 4.2.1933 Klein an Eppelein, ND 22/5.

<sup>40</sup> *Freimund* No. 18, 4.5.1933, Jg. 78 pp. 177f, entitled ‘Evangelium, Mission und Volkstum’, excerpts from *Mission und Nationalsozialismus*, Lose Hefte hg. vom Studentenbund für Mission, No. 50 Februar 1933. For more information on Johannes Warneck (1867-1944), who was the son of Gustav Warneck, and had become mission director in 1932, see for example Paul Gerhard Aring, ‘Warneck, Johannes’, BBKL.

<sup>41</sup> *Freimund* 1933, pp. 152-155; The article was placed in Hitler’s birthday issue, 20 April 1933, and entitled ‘Bedeutung der Heidenmission fuer die volksmissionarische Arbeit’, reprint from *Journal Wort und Tat. Hefte der Apologetischen Centrale, Berlin-Dahlem*, Edited by Walter Kuennet, issue 1933/6.

<sup>42</sup> *Freimund* 1932, p. 152.

to National Socialism, quoting from his party membership application which he sent in mid-April to the local NSDAP Ortsgruppenleiter:

Seit dem ich die Lebensgeschichte Hermann Görings gelesen habe, komme ich nicht mehr zur inneren Ruhe, sondern fühle mich innerlich getrieben, meine schwache Kraft der großen vaterländischen Bewegung zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Since I have read Hermann Goering's autobiography I have not been able to reach inner calm, but feel internally driven to offer my weak powers to the great patriotic movement.

Eppelein explained to the readers that while he had some reservations and concerns about National Socialism—which were, he believed, shared by the party's leaders—'sympathetic neutrality' towards National Socialism was not what Volk and Fatherland needed. As a Christian one had to be a servant like Jesus and become engulfed in the world and its affairs. After establishing his credentials as a patriotic Christian National Socialist Eppelein then added a short remark that he would not be responding to the attack against him in the *Fränkisches Volk*:

Die Behandlung jener "Entgleisung einiger evangelischen Christen gegenüber dem bayerischen evangelischen Missionsdirektor" in Nr. 93 des "Fränk. Volkes" habe ich vertrauensvoll treuen Missionsfreunden innerhalb der NSDAP. überlassen.<sup>43</sup>

The treatment of this 'derailed statement of some Protestant Christians in regard to the Bavarian Protestant mission director' in No. 93 of the 'Fraenk. Volk' I have trustfully left to true mission friends within the NSDAP.

During the following months Eppelein tried to offer the institution's conference and training course facilities (*Freizeitheim*), inaugurated in June 1930<sup>44</sup>, to the German Christian movement and to various sub organisations of the National Socialists, such as the SA and SS, the National Socialist Protestant Pastors Federation (NSEPB) and the National Socialists' union organisation (Nationalsozialistische Betriebs Organisation, NSBO).<sup>45</sup> He contacted those who were friends of Neuendettelsau and influential in National Socialist circles, such as Friedrich Klein, who played a central role in the Bavarian German Christian movement, and Dekan Friedrich Hanemann, who was a party member and with Schemm was sorting out the re-emerging Lossin problem. Hanemann promised to put to Schemm that the Neuendettelsauer mission would be interested in running courses for SA and SS members, while Eppelein tried to show the usefulness of the *Freizeitheim* directly to Schemm by inviting him to give a talk to pastors there about what the new government expected from the Protestant church.<sup>46</sup> At

<sup>43</sup> *Freimund* 1933, p. 160, article 'Die "Evangelische Reichskirche" kommt'.

<sup>44</sup> Inauguration 9.6.1930. See Friedrich Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen* Vol. IIb, p. 381.

<sup>45</sup> See 10.4.1933 Eppelein to Hanemann, 7.5.1933 Hanemann to Eppelein, 15.5.1933 Eppelein to Hanemann, ND 30/42; 16.8.1933 Eppelein to Helmut Kern ND 22/22; 22.9.1933 Eppelein to Klein ND 22/5; 21.11.1933 Eppelein to Stoessel, 23.11.1933 Stoessel to Eppelein ND52/21 Stoessel.

<sup>46</sup> 1.4.1933 and 19.4.1933 Eppelein to Minister Schemm, ND 28/1-2. Eppelein expressed Neuendettelsau's joy about having a Protestant minister for culture in Bavaria, and tried to tie Schemm

the end of the year nothing had come of Neuendettelsau's offer, as the party had to make a general and fundamental decision about its training courses first. Nevertheless, Eppelein wrote, the *Kirchenvorsteherfreizeit*, weekend seminars for presbyters, already offered plenty of opportunities as the lay leaders of the congregations were nowadays 'nothing but National Socialists', and the course thus needed a thorough restructuring and rethinking.<sup>47</sup>

The seminar weekends were a central element in Neuendettelsau's *Volksmission* enterprise. Advertisements were frequently placed in the *Freimund*, but only very rarely did the journal carry excerpts of speeches given at the seminars.<sup>48</sup> Readers were to be encouraged to participate in one of the seminars, and not anticipate a handy summary in the journal. To dedicate a number of issues of the journal to talks given at a recent *Kirchenvorsteherfreizeit* was thus a significant decision of the *Freimund*'s editors. It underlined both the magnitude of the shift within Germany and the perceived need to educate a wider Lutheran public to take an active part in the re-forming of the German nation.<sup>49</sup> A lecture by Eppelein in *Freimund* No 12 about the dangers of Bolshevism started the seminar series.<sup>50</sup> The next issue, however, carried an apology by the editors, explaining to readers that the seminar reports were shorter than promised as *Freimund* Nos 13 and 14 were also accommodating a new additional purpose. A letter had reached the mission from Ralph Long, Director of the National Lutheran Council in New York, whom Eppelein had met in America the year before, inquiring about conditions in the new Germany. It was published in full in German translation in the

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into some of Neuendettelsau's activities. Eppelein suggested to Schemm either to give a seminar talk, or write an article for the *Freimund*, which was, he assured Schemm, not only read in Germany, but also in America and Australia. Eppelein also pointed out Neuendettelsau's New Guinea mission expertise in fostering 'organic composition of congregations' (*organischer Gemeindeaufbau*), something 'lacking here in Germany'.

47 16.8.1933 Eppelein to Helmut Heinrichsen ND22/22.

48 The July issue of 1932 carried an article by Bishop Rendtorff, Bishop of Turinga (Tübingen) and founding member of the *Christlich-Deutsche Bewegung* (precursor to the German Christians). *Freimund* No. 27, 7 July 1932, pp. 231-233. Instead of the talk given by Rendtorff the *Freimund* printed a leaflet by Rendtorff, which dealt, the *Freimund* explained, with non-Bavarian circumstances, but could 'more or less' be used as 'guidelines' for the *Volksmission* work of the Neuendettelsau mission. In contrast to this embrace of Rendtorff the *Freimund* took a slightly more reserved approach to the *Bekenntniss Altonaer Pfarrer*, which argued for a distance of churches from politics and came from the moderate Lutheran side of the movement which formed the Confessing Church and stood in opposition to the German Christians. *Freimund* No. 10 pp. 92-95 reprinted 'Ein Bekenntnis Altonaer Pfarrer zur Not und Verwirrung des Oeffentlichen Lebens'. The editors introduced it by pointing out that they would not sign every word, but a lot could be learned from the statement as a whole, which was given during a congregation meeting in the main church in Altona on 11.1.1933. See Scholder pp. 233-236.

49 23 to 26 February 1933. See *Freimund* No. 12, 23 March 1933, p. 106.

50 *Freimund* No 12, 23 March 1933, pp. 106-110.

*Freimund*. Long wrote that news was being spread in American papers that Christianity and the churches were under attack by the National Socialist government. Eppelein's answer to Long's letter was reassuring. Neither Christianity nor the churches, he said, were being attacked. The new Germany was rather based on Christian culture and the true unity of the German people, and aimed at fighting the destructive influence of the black red and golden international movements—meaning Catholicism, Marxism and capitalism:

Gegen diesen überaus gefährlichen Zersetzungsprozeß, der von den Vertretern des jüdischen Gastvolkes noch besonders gefördert wurde, hat nun eine deutsche Volksbewegung eingesetzt und am 5 März einen entscheidenden Sieg errungen. Diese nationale Bewegung bedeutet solange einen Genesungsprozeß am deutschen Volkskörper, als sie nicht entartet in menschlichen Größenwahn, sondern Gott, dem Herrn der Geschichte, die Ehre gibt, die Ihm gebührt.<sup>51</sup>

Against this very dangerous process of corruption, which was especially supported by the representatives of the Jewish guest people, a German peoples' movement has now started up and gained a decisive victory on 5 March. This national movement can be understood as a recovery process of the body of the German people as long as it does not degenerate into human megalomania, but gives the honour, which is His due, to God, the Lord of history.

Eppelein suggested that the making of a new economy, which was neither capitalist nor Marxist, was the most urgent task. The new government also opposed democracy, which had shown itself to be unsuitable for Germany. Paul's vision of an interconnected 'organic'<sup>52</sup> organism, detailed for congregations in Roman 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, he argued, was now being applied to the nation. This new organic nation, Eppelein asserted, had only limited space for Jews, the 'international Jewry', especially in leadership positions, and especially for those who had recently migrated to Germany from the East.<sup>53</sup> Great hopes, Eppelein said, rested on the new government. The only concerns were antichristian groups within the NSDAP and the wider *voelkische* movement, but Hitler was, Eppelein assured his readers and Long, not part of this.

In the previous issues Eppelein had already impressed on readers that the status of the National Socialists had changed from being just one of many parties to being the

51 *Freimund* No 13, p. 117. See also 8.3.1933 Ralph H. Long to Friedrich Eppelein, and 29.3.1933 Eppelein to Long, ND 26/41.

52 *Organisch*, and *Organismus* are philosophical terms which dominated the thought of German Idealism (for example Herder, Schelling). It argued against 'mechanical' models of the Enlightenment for a living growing interconnectedness, particularly of a society and *Volk*.

53 Using the National Socialist language Eppelein declared Jews to be a 'guest people' (*Gastvolk*), and therefore not German. The stripping of citizenship of German Jews was only a logical consequence of this. Note that as far as I can see the term *Gastvolk*, was rarely used before - if ever - in the *Freimund*. For a description of the measures against East European Jews implemented by the National Socialists after the March election see for example Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany & the Jews Vol 1: The years of Persecution 1933-1939*, London 1997, p. 27.

rightful government, to whom every Lutheran owed allegiance.<sup>54</sup> It was not hard for true Lutherans to obey and respect the new government, as it had already started to take action against communists and social democrats, and against all filth and smut (*Schmutz und Schund*) in publications, pictures and films.<sup>55</sup> *Sauberkeit*, cleanliness, was what the Nazis were about to create, the *Freimund* jubilantly announced. What was needed now, Eppelein said, was forgiving and ‘giving’—constructive—criticism, and not destructive criticism that provided foreign newspapers with material against the new nationalistic Germany. For example, in England reports reminiscent of the worst anti-German propaganda during the war were already in circulation, such as the allegation that minister Goering himself had had someone set fire to the Reichstag.<sup>56</sup> The editors of the *Freimund* decided not to provide any grist for the mills of foreign newspapers, and to use Long’s letter as an opportunity to go the extra mile and provide information for readers abroad, especially in North and South America, Australia and New Guinea, to counterbalance the malicious attacks on the new government. Half a year later, in October 1933 Eppelein in a letter to a Lutheran colleague, Johannes Rupprecht, still defended the decision not to criticize the new government in the *Freimund* as part of Neuendettelsau’s mission strategy at home:

Dazu kommt aber weiter, daß ich immer vorsichtiger werde mit der Weitergabe von irgendwelchen Alarm-nachrichten. In unserer Zeit kommt es wirklich darauf an, daß man ein einiges Volk wird ... Darum muß meines Erachtens eine Zeitschrift, die heute volksmissionarisch wirken soll, vor allem darauf ausgehen, nicht die Negation sondern das Positive in den Vordergrund zu rücken.<sup>57</sup>

In addition I am becoming increasingly more careful about handing on alarmist news. In our time it is really important, that one becomes a unified people...That is why, in my opinion, a journal which wants to influence in a volksmissionary way, has to aim to place not negation but positive things in the foreground.

At the same time as the National Socialists were busily organising a nation-wide boycott of Jewish shops for the first days of April as retaliation against agitation

<sup>54</sup> Eppelein refers to a central Lutheran concept, based on Romans 13, 1: ‘Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.’ The translation by Luther uses the term ‘*Obrigkeit*’, authority, government.

<sup>55</sup> Within the first three months of Nazi rule left-wing parties had been suppressed, and many of their publications banned. On 10 May books by authors declared Jewish, Marxist and pacifist were publicly burned in a symbolic way in a number of German university towns. See for example Martin Gilbert, *Descent into Barbarism. A history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: 1933-1951*, London (paperback) 1999, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Friedrich Eppelein, Ein Wort der Schriftleitung zur heutigen Lage, *Freimund* No 11, pp. 101-102; see also *Freimund* No 12, p. 105 about war propaganda. The belief in the devastating effect of British propaganda was, as Peter Longerich has pointed out, shared by the political right in Germany. British propaganda in tandem with traitors at home, had stabbed a potentially victorious Germany in the back and caused Germany’s defeat in WWI (*Dolchstoßlegende*). See Peter Longerich, ‘Nationalsozialistische Propaganda’, in Bracher, Funke, Jacobsen (eds.), *Deutschland 1933-1945*, Düsseldorf 1993 (3. Edition), p. 292.

<sup>57</sup> 12.10.1933 Eppelein to Studienprofessor Lic. Johannes Rupprecht, ND 24/11-II.

abroad<sup>58</sup>, the editors of the *Freimund* prepared their special editions, full of excerpts of speeches by Hitler and other National Socialist leaders, in an effort to do their bit to defend the new Germany. *Freimund* No. 13 offered detailed descriptions of the so-called 'day of Potsdam', the opening of the Reichstag on 21 March 1933, and speeches given in the Potsdam Garrison church and the Reichstag on that day. Bishop Dibelius' sermon and introductory words by President Hindenburg were followed by Adolf Hitler's 'appeal to the German Volk', Reichspräsident Göring's opening of the Reichstag, and Hitler's parliamentary speech introducing the 'Ermächtigungsgesetz', followed by the text of the Ermächtigungsgesetz itself.<sup>59</sup> *Freimund* No. 14 published a speech by vice chancellor von Papen, and two radio speeches by the Bavarian Reichskommissar General von Epp, and the new Bavarian Minister for Culture Hans Schemm, as well as a declaration by Schemm's department.<sup>60</sup> The following *Freimund* issues carried much smaller reports and excerpts of original speeches, with the exception of *Freimund* No. 19, which presented a long speech by Schemm to teachers in Nuremberg, and *Freimund* No. 20, which reprinted a parliamentary speech by Hitler.<sup>61</sup>

Some readers in Germany were disturbed by the space the *Freimund* suddenly devoted to reprinting political speeches by members of the new government. One parish pastor wrote to Eppelein, that, while he himself supported the new government and an alliance

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58 Saul Friedlaender in his history *Nazi Germany & the Jews*, tells a slightly different story to the *Freimund* of cause and effect. The spread of anti-Jewish violence after the March elections, he argues, was widely covered and criticised in much of the foreign press, notably in Britain and the USA. In response to this the German government threatened a nation-wide boycott of Jewish retailers unless the British and American governments declared publicly their opposition to anti-German agitation in their countries. Despite the resulting appeasement of Germany the National Socialists nevertheless went ahead with the boycott, which took place from 1 to 4 April 1933, followed three days later by new laws, which excluded Jews or people of Jewish descent from the civil service. Saul Friedlaender, *The Years of Persecution*, pp. 18-25; see also for example Norbert Frei, 'Die Juden im NS-Staat', Broszat & Frei (eds.), *Das Dritte Reich im Ueberblick*, pp. 126f and 209f, and Broszat, *Die Machtergreifung*, p. 233; For examples of early British and American publications against National Socialists see Martin Gilbert, *Descent into Barbarism*, p. 18.

59 *Freimund* 13, 30.3.1933: 'Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Gott', D. Dr Dibelius, Predigt zur Eröffnung des Reichstages, pp. 119-120; speeches by Reichspräsident Hindenburg (p.121), Adolf Hitler (pp. 121-123), and speeches in the Reichstag that same day by Hermann Goering (pp. 123-124), Adolf Hitler (pp. 124-127), Das Ermächtigungsgesetz (p. 127-128). The 'Ermächtigungsgesetz' is the short name the 'Gesetz zur Behebung der Not in Volk und Reich' from 24.3.1933 is commonly known as.

60 *Freimund* No. 14, excerpts of speeches by von Papen on 17.3.1933 in Breslau (pp. 135-136), von Epp (p. 136), and Schemm (pp. 137-141), Bekanntmachung des Staatsministeriums für Unterricht und Kultus vom 28.3.1933 Nr. II 12429 über die religiöse und nationale Haltung der Lehrkräfte an den bayr. Schulen, p. 141.

61 'Volk und Gott'; Speech by Schemm, Kundgebung der Fränkischen Lehrerschaft in Nürnberg, *Freimund* No 19, 11.5.33, pp. 195-196; 'Unser Führer Adolf Hitler vor dem Reichstag am 17.5.1933', pp. 202-206.



of national movements, he doubted that the *Freimund's* political development would be shared by all readers of the journal. 'Is it advisable', he asked, 'to reprint whole speeches by Hitler in the Reichstag, which are already known through daily newspapers?'<sup>62</sup> Others disapproved of the *Freimund's* increasingly one-sided and uncritical reporting, which they perceived as self-censorship, as well as a lack of concern for a Christian-church focus. 'Since when', wrote another parish pastor, 'is it our task to create enthusiasm for Hitler?'<sup>63</sup> Eppelein defended the *Freimund's* new pitch:

Daß wir in den letzten Freimundnummern der Politik mehr Raum gegeben haben als dies früher der Fall war und wohl auch in Zukunft sein wird, hat die verschiedensten Gründe. Hier sei nur der hervorgehoben, daß der Freimund in aller Welt gelesen wird, d.h. in Amerika, in Brasilien, in Australien, in Neuguinea. Da ist es dem evangelischen Deutschen ein großes Anliegen, einermassen aufklärend zu wirken. Zu dem haben wir eben auch wiederum nur den Freimund zur Verfügung, wenn es sich darum handelt unsere Berufsarbeiter in Neuguinea und Brasilien über die Vorgänge im deutschen Vaterlande auf dem laufenden zu erhalten. Die Auslandsdeutschen haben so schwere Kämpfe durchzumachen, daß wir ihnen helfen müssen, so gut wir können.<sup>64</sup>

That we have given more space to politics in the last issues of the *Freimund* than before and than probably in the future has various reasons. Here I only want to emphasise that the *Freimund* is being read throughout the world, that is in America, Brazil, Australia, and New Guinea. That's why it is of great concern to a protestant German to bring some elucidation. In addition we also only have the *Freimund* available to keep our staff in New Guinea and Brazil up to date about the events in the German fatherland. The Germans abroad have to get through such difficult battles, that we have to help them as well as we can.

Even after November 1933 when the *Freimund* ceased to print Hitler's speeches Eppelein still defended the contentious issues and the editors' intentions:

Wenn einem aber mitgeteilt wurde, von draußen, wie maßlos wiederum gegen das deutsche Volk und unsere Regierung gehetzt wurde und wie hilflos unsere Leute in der weiten Welt all den Dingen gegenüber gestanden sind, so hilt ich's allerdings für meine vaterländische Pflicht, hier für mein Volk

But when one is told, from outside, how excessively again the German people and our government were being agitated against and how helpless our people in the wide world were in the face of all these things, then I indeed considered it my patriotic duty to stand up for my people.

62 27.5.1933 Pfarrer Dr Dollinger to Eppelein, ND 24/11.

63 20/12/1933 Pfarrer K. Behringer to Helmut Kern, LKAN, Kirchliche Vereine, Amt fuer Volksmission Nr. 2 - Kern.

64 29.5.1933 Eppelein to Pfarrer Dr. Dollinger, Wuestenselbitz, ND 24/11. See also 18.7.1933 Eppelein to Jakob Herrlinger, Fischhafen. ND 52/21 J. Herrlinger.

Ich habe absichtlich um unserer Brueder im Auslande willen verschiedene Freimundnummern fast ganz und gar mit Politik gefuellt, damit sie auf die Art und Weise auch von mir ein klein wenig in den Stand gesetzt werden, die Dinge daheim mitzuerleben.

I have on purpose for the sake of our brothers abroad filled various issues of the *Freimund* nearly completely with politics, so that in this way they are enabled by me to some degree to live through the events at home.

The criticism by its German readers made the editors publish a short note in *Freimund* (June 1933, p. 259, Jg 79) in the section '*Aus dem Leben unseres Volkes*'. Excerpts from correspondence from Australian readers thanking the *Freimund* was ended with the comment:

Wir sehen aber auch, welch vaterländische und ökumenisch-lutherische Aufgabe der Aufklärung der Freimund hat und wie auch die Leser in der deutschen Heimat dieser Verpflichtung der Schriftleitung Verständnis entgegenbringen müssen.

But we also see what patriotic and ecumenical-Lutheran tasks of enlightening the *Freimund* has, and how the readers at home in Germany have to have understanding for this duty of the editors.

The *Freimund's* shift from its audience at home to Lutherans abroad as the prime target group for most of its political reporting was acknowledged with gratitude by members of the American and Australian churches. Theile explained to Eppelein that since Hitler had come to power he and his fellow Lutherans had been inundated with questions about the situation in Germany:

Wir erklarten immer wieder, dass wir die Kabelnachrichten nicht fuer wahr hielten, und dass wir auf authentische Nachrichten aus Deutschland warteten, ehe wir uns weiter aussprechen koennten. Ich bin recht dankbar fuer das reiche Material, das 'Freimund' No 13 und 14 darreicht. Man gelangt dadurch zu einer klaren Wertung der Lage. Es hat das deutsche General-Konsulat in Sydney sich redlich bemueht, der Luegenpropaganda der Judenpresse entgegenzutreten und nicht ohne Erfolg. ... Jetzt wird es uns moeglich sein mit groesserem Nachdruck als bisher, die Unwahrheit der Pressemeldungen zu bekaempfen, und wir freuen uns, dass unser Vertrauen so glaenzend gerechtfertigt sich erweist.<sup>66</sup>

We declared again and again, that we did not regard the cabled news as true, and were waiting for authentic news from Germany, before we would be able to pronounce on anything further. I am quite thankful for the material which *Freimund* No 13 and 14 provide. One thereby arrives at a clear judgment about the situation. The German Consul General in Sydney has made honest efforts to stand up to the lying propaganda of the Jewish press<sup>67</sup>, and not without success. ... Now it will be possible for us to fight against the untruths of the press announcements more forcefully than before, and we are glad that our trust turns out to have been fully justified.

The *Freimund* continued to be seen by Australian and American Lutheran church leaders connected with Neuendettelsau as a far more reliable source of information than anything printed in their own countries. In mid-1934 Friedrich Braun complained to Eppelein how Germany was being attacked and Goebbels ridiculed in an influential weekly paper in New York, and asked for a continuation of Dr. Zellfelder's quarterly reviews, while Theile in Australia even went so far as to declare that all newspapers were used for propaganda, and only the *Freimund* reported the plain truth.<sup>68</sup>

The extensive reporting in the *Freimund* in the first half of 1933 added to information reaching mission staff through private correspondence. The reaction was joy and relief about the changes in Germany, mixed with a sense of distance, and the difficulty of sharing the enthusiasm, which had grabbed friends and fellow missionaries in Germany. Karl Wacke in New Guinea thanked his colleague Leonhard Flierl for his 'elaborate

65 30.12.1933 Eppelein to Pfarrer Bogner, ND 24/11.

66 11.5.1933 Friedrich Theile to Dr F. Eppelein, ND 53/31.

67 At that time Sir Isaac Alfred Isaacs was Governor General of Australia (1931-1936); he was the first Australian-born person in this position. The Anti-Semitism expressed by Theile and other Australian Lutherans was shared by other sections of the society. For Australian responses to Jews in general and Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in particular see for example Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, Kew, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994.

68 12.5.1934 Friedrich Braun to Eppelein; 19.6.1934 Friedrich Theile to Eppelein; ND 16/31-33.

details' about the situation in Germany. 'Yes, it must be something very great, what you are able to experience'.<sup>69</sup> Jakob Herrlinger in Finschhafen wrote to Eppelein:

Es eruebrigts sich wohl auf das Gebiet der Politik einzugehen; da sind wir Neuguineer viel zu weit entfernt, um da mitreden zu koennen ... wir stehen ja abseits vom grossen Weltgeschehen, erleben alles um Monate spaeter als es wirklich die Welt bewegt und wir sind deswegen nicht ungluecklich.<sup>70</sup>

It is probably superfluous to go into the field of politics; we here in New Guinea are much too far away to have a say ... we stand aside from the great world affairs, experience everything months later than when it really moves the world, and we are not unhappy about this.

There were exceptions. Hubert Stürzenhofecker, who was related to the large missionary family of Margarete and Georg Stürzenhofecker, and had worked as a gardener for the Mission in Neuendettelsau before being sent out to New Guinea as a plantation manager, had joined the NSDAP in 1927. On his way to New Guinea he was to spend several months in late 1933 in Australia to improve his English. During his stay with Pastor Reuter in Murgon, Queensland, he wrote to Director Eppelein about his achievements reacquainting German-Australians with their heritage and the new Germany:

Schon des oeffteren habe ich mit deutschen Liedern Freude gemacht und Freude erlebt. ... Ueberhaupt sind die Leute stolz darauf wenn sie noch deutsch reden koennen. Mein Parteiabzeichen das ich trage, ist immer der Anlass, ueber das neue Deutschland zu reden. Meist fange ich damit an, dass ich von der Zeit nach dem Krieg, alo (sic) von 1918 rede, und dann von dem Niedergang des deutschen Volkes, parallel von dem Kampf der N.S.D.A.P. bis zum 5. Maerz 1933 erzaehle. Wenn ich von der Beseitigung der Arbeitslosigkeit, von der Freimachung vom Judentum (ohne Greuel) und von der Aussenpolitik unter Hitler rede, dann sagen die Leute hier, warum bekaempft man denn eigentlich diesen Mann hier in Australien. auch (sic) bei den englischen Familien findet man sehr viel Sypathien fuer das jetzige Deutschland und spricht oft den Wunsch aus, dass Australien auch einen Hitler haben sollte.<sup>71</sup>

Already many a time I have brought and received enjoyment from German songs. ... Generally the people are proud when they are still able to speak German. My party badge that I wear always prompts talks about the new Germany. Mostly I begin to talk about the time after the war, meaning 1918, then recount the decline of the German people, parallel with the struggle of the NSDAP until 5 March 1933. When I talk about the eradication of unemployment, about the freeing from the Jewry (without cruelty) and about the foreign policy under Hitler, then the people here say, why does one actually fight this man here in Australia. The English families as well have a lot of sympathy for today's Germany and often express the wish that Australia should also have a Hitler.

Johann Flierl, the New Guinea mission's founder, who had always been indefatigable in producing pamphlets devoted to mission and government politics, managed to get an article published in the *Barossa News*, entitled 'Hitler and his Government', which was full of praise for the new rulers.<sup>72</sup> He also tried to convince Johann Julius Stolz, president of the UELCA and editor of the churches two journals, the *Kirchenblatt* and the *Lutheran Herald* to publish Hitler's thanksgiving speech, a copy of which Christian Keyßer had sent him. To overcome the decision of the latest pastors' meeting not to get

<sup>69</sup> See for example 10.8.1933 Wacke to Leonhard Flierl, ND 52/21 L. Flierl.

<sup>70</sup> 24.3.1933 Jakob Herrlinger to Eppelein, ND 52/21 J. Herrlinger.

<sup>71</sup> 18.12.1933 Hubert Stürzenhofecker to Friedrich Eppelein, ND 52/21 H. Stürzenhofecker.

<sup>72</sup> *The Barossa News* 25.5.1933.

too entangled in the German Hitler movement—the memory of WWI was still all too fresh—Flierl suggested to Stolz that perhaps he could order material from the *Britons*, who were similar to the German movement, their motto being ‘Britain for the Britons’.<sup>73</sup>

Flierl continued to write articles for the local Australian press, an effort Eppelein greatly acknowledged:

Man sieht bei der Gelegenheit wieder von welcher Bedeutung die deutsche Weltmission ist. Ich brauche Ihnen wohl nicht erst zu versichern wie dankbar wir dafür sind, daß Sie für die neue deutsche Regierung und das deutsche Volk und seinen Führer Adolf Hitler in Australien eintrete.<sup>74</sup>

On this occasion one can see again how important the German world-mission is. I will probably not need to reassure you how thankful we are that you stand up for the new government and the German people and its leader Adolf Hitler here in Australia.

That same week Eppelein wrote delightedly to a colleague and parish pastor:

Was haben nur die Sendboten unseres Neuendettelsauer Missionswerkes in den letzten Monaten alles getan haben (sic), um in Australien den Greuelnachrichten über das neue Deutschland entgegenzutreten.<sup>75</sup>

What have the emissaries of our Neuendettelsauer Mission organisation not done to stand up against the sensationalist reporting in Australia about the new Germany.

With the extension of the Neuendettelsauer Volksmission into a political role, the tasks of missionaries, as Eppelein saw it, shifted. They had been the link between home and abroad, the mission field and the German supporters. Their talks to congregations during their holidays in Germany had brought and continued to bring eyewitness accounts of the foreign mission work to the Franconian villagers and had made strange and foreign New Guineans and their new Christian lives familiar and understandable. Now, travelling from Germany to the mission field, they became ‘emissaries’ bringing testimonies about the new Germany and its rejuvenation to the Australian Lutherans in towns and villages from South Australia to Queensland. These testimonies were parallel stories to those about New Guinea. They were about the same vision of a Volk united

<sup>73</sup> 6.1.1933 Johann Flierl to JJ Stolz, ND 16/31-33; Michael Billig described the Britons Publishing Company as having ‘been issuing for more than 50 years some of the most offensive, anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi material to be published in the English language. Its perennial standard is the Protocols of the Elders of Zion which it has republished over eighty times throughout the years.’ Michael Billig, *Psychology, Racism & Fascism*, 1979, reprinted with the permission of Michael Billig and Searchlight in: Andrew S. Winston (ed.) *Psychology, Racism & Fascism: An On-line Edition*, <http://www.ferris.edu/isar/archives/billig/chapter8.htm>. For more literature on the Britons publishing house see Billig, chapter 8, footnote 53.

<sup>74</sup> 13.1.1934 Eppelein to Johann Flierl, ND 52/21 J Flierl (1921-1935). According to Eppelein’s letter the article was about ‘the Jewish question.’ Johann Flierl replied to Eppelein (23/2/1934) about the ‘world wide Jewish perditions/bane (*Verderben*)’: ‘The antichrist is at the front door’.

<sup>75</sup> 18.1.1934 Eppelein an Pfarrer Markert, Berg/Obfr., ND 24/11.

and rejuvenated, a new morality, and a commitment to Christ. Truly in 1933 it seemed, at least for some, as if great hopes were being realised abroad and at home.

Looking back at the position Neuendettelsau took in the late 1920s of party political neutrality and comparing it with its public action in 1933 defending the new Germany, it seems as if the institution had radically shifted its approach to politics and political involvement: in 1930 the strict rule was given to staff not to be identified with any political movement, but in 1933 the mission journal publicly defended Hitler's Germany. The answer that party politics is something different from politics in general, and that Neuendettelsau rejected support of specific parties, but stood up for the legitimate government of the day fails adequately to take into account the complexities of the situation.<sup>76</sup>

The concept of a unified Christian people (Volk), which is also at the heart of the so-called Keyßer method, is a constant ideological principle throughout the late Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Third Reich, and explains to some degree Neuendettelsau's reluctance to get involved in or identified with party politics.<sup>77</sup> With the coming to power of Hitler, it could be argued, Neuendettelsau saw its goal of a unified reformed nation within imminent reach, and its support of the new government, while being a political act, did not constitute party political factionalism. In fact, during the last years of the Weimar Republic, the mission society did not refrain from political commentary, only from clearly positioned party political statements.<sup>78</sup>

Yet a closer look reveals that something else was happening in 1933. Neuendettelsau's defence of the new Germany was not so much driven by a call to unity or internal reform—one of the themes most dominant in its criticism of Weimar—but motivated by an attack on the attackers of Germany, the Jews, personified as 'international Jewry'. In the climate of ever-increasing anti-Semitism in Germany, Neuendettelsau took up the language and agenda of the National Socialist propaganda, and in doing so revealed its own deep seated anti-Semitism. How far, one wonders, were members of the

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<sup>76</sup> Especially considering that the *Freimund* from time to time called for the abolition not only of the legitimate government of the day, but of the Weimar Republic as a whole.

<sup>77</sup> Here pragmatic motives of not alienating its supporters, and risking a loss of donations also play a crucial role—especially as Bavarian Lutherans had the alternative of giving money to the Leipzig mission, which was also purely Lutheran, and had the advantage of managing its foreign mission alone.

<sup>78</sup> These statements nevertheless tended to favour some parties, especially the Christlicher Volksdienst and the Deutschnationale.

Neuendettelsauer society prepared to support, as Hubert Stuerzenhofecker called it, the freeing from the Jewry (without cruelty)?<sup>79</sup> The April boycott was followed by the introduction of the so-called Aryan clause for civil servants, the first law of many to disenfranchise Germans identified as Jews or of Jewish ancestry and remove them from the nation. The *Freimund* supported the Aryan clause and informed its readers that of 3.600 lawyers in Berlin, three-quarters were Jewish. In Nuremberg nearly half of all lawyers were of 'non-German' ethnicity. The *Freimund* continued:

Man vergleiche dazu den geringen Prozentsatz der Juden innerhalb der deutschen Bevölkerung, dann bekommt man einen Eindruck von der zunehmenden Ueberfremdung der führenden Schichten des deutschen Volkes und kann verstehen, wenn schon um der deutschen akademischen Jugend willen eine Reaktion gegen jene Ueberfremdung eingetreten ist.<sup>80</sup>

One compares to this the low percentage of Jews in the German population, and then one gains an impression of the growing foreign infiltration of the upper stratas of the German people and can understand, when, for the sake of the German academic youth alone, a reaction against this foreign infiltration has set in.

With the *Freimund* issues 13 and 14 Neuendettelsau became an, albeit minor, participant in the 1933 boycott. Blended with and inseparable from the society's anti-Semitism was patriotism. This patriotism was more than a wish that Germany, too, like other nations and peoples, might be united and Christian. This patriotism was fuelled and coloured by the shame and humiliation of Germany's defeat and the peace treaty of Versailles. Thus in 1933 the mission society stepped out of its self-proclaimed role as critical commentator and spiritual adviser and took on the role of active defender of and participant in the Third Reich.

The ascent to power of Hitler in 1933, and the central position that the party took so rapidly and all the implications for the German state and Germans were developments that took time to have an impact on the mission staff in New Guinea. Those few just

<sup>79</sup> In 1948 Christian Keyßer recalled in his autobiography *Ein Menschenleben* (pp. 335f) how he made a special effort to travel to Nuremberg on the day of the boycott, an event of which he approved:

Mir lag daran, möglichst klar zu sehen. Deshalb fuhr ich am 1. April, am Judenboykott-Tag, eigens nach Nürnberg zu einem christlichen Freund der SS-Mann war ... Er mußte die SS-Posten vor den Judengeschäften kontrollieren und nahm mich zu diesem Kontrollgang mit. Er fragte die Posten, ob alles ruhig und ordentlich zugehe, was diese bejahten. Ich konnte nichts von Ausschreitungen sehen noch hören. Im Gegenteil, ich hörte allerlei Gutes. So sah ich in Hitler geradezu ein Geschenk Gottes an unser geschlagenes und übel behandeltes Volk.

I was interested in seeing clearly. That's why I travelled on 1 April, the day of the boycott of Jews, to Nuremberg [visiting] a Christian friend, who was member of the SS ... He had to inspect the SS sentries in front of the Jewish shops and took me with him for this round of inspections. He asked the sentries whether everything was calm and orderly, and they answered in the affirmative. I could not see or hear of any excesses. On the contrary, I heard a lot of good things. Thus I saw in Hitler almost a gift of God to our beaten and badly treated Volk.

That Keyßer travelled to Nuremberg, the biggest town nearby with a large Jewish community, ensured that he was able to witness a variety of shops being boycotted. It was pointed out to me during an interview I conducted with one retired missionary, that the village of Neuendettelsau was '*judenfrei*', free of Jews.

<sup>80</sup> *Freimund* 1933, p. 149.

travelling from Germany to New Guinea took with them an emotionally charged version of the events, coloured by the euphoria shared and expressed in public celebrations. But for the majority of the staff in the field the political changes in Germany were felt and interpreted differently. From far away New Guinea, the 'awakening' of the fatherland was seen as a German, patriotic event. The significance of the NSDAP as a movement and a party taking control of the nation was mostly overlooked. It was not until mid-1933 that the first tangible manifestation of the new Germany reached New Guinea in the form of a Germany navy training ship, the *Köln*, on a goodwill tour through the Pacific. The cruiser's crew, however, were in the same position as the missionaries on the field—the *Köln* had left Germany in December 1932, and Weimar Germany had thus ceased and the Third Reich begun while the cruiser's crew were travelling abroad.

## The Light Cruiser *Köln* visits Rabaul

The way in which the visit was received by high and low is a pleasant sign that the bitterness against Germany of the war and post-war years is almost completely in the past.

*Die Art und Weise wie der Besuch von hoch und niedrig aufgenommen wurde, ist ein erfreuliches Zeichen dafür, daß die Bitterkeit der Kriegs- und Nachkriegsjahre gegen Deutschland fast restlos der Vergangenheit angehört.*

*Kirchenblatt*, 3 April 1933<sup>81</sup>

At the end of 1932 the Territories Branch of the Prime Minister's Department asked Brigadier General Thomas Griffiths, the Administrator in New Guinea, his opinion on a delicate matter. The German Consul General was seeking permission for a German cruiser, on a goodwill tour through the Pacific, and scheduled to visit several Australian ports, to call at Rabaul. The visit, planned for June 1933, would be unofficial and official arrangements would therefore be kept to a minimum.<sup>82</sup> Administrator Griffith raised no objections to the visit, but suggested that 'in view of the possible psychological effect on native mind' an Australian cruiser visit New Guinea about the same time.<sup>83</sup>

The journal of the white settlers in the Pacific, the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, carried a small announcement by the magazine's correspondent in Apia, Samoa, of the cruiser's intended visit in its December issue. The cruiser *Köln*, 'a training ship for midshipmen', was to leave Germany in December, and would call at Apia next May. The magazine ended this brief section with the comment: 'This will be the first official visit of a German warship to Western Samoa since the War'.<sup>84</sup>

The *Köln* was an impressive ship. Staffed by 21 officers and 493 crew, and 174 metres in length, she was more than a third longer than Burns Philip & Co's newest passenger

<sup>81</sup> The German language journal of the UELCA, the *Kirchenblatt*, reporting on the visit of the German cruiser *Köln* in Adelaide, No 7, Jg. 9, 3.4.1933, pp. 97f.

<sup>82</sup> 17.12.1932 Prime Minister's Department, Territories Branch to Administrator, Rabaul, Cablegram, NAA, A518, I836/2.

<sup>83</sup> 23.12.1932 Administrator to Prime Minister's Department, Territories Branch, Cablegram, NAA, A518, I836/2.

<sup>84</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 20 December, 1932, p. 48. Visiting ships disturbed and encouraged Australians; The ships tied Australia to a wider world but could bring both invaders and rescuers; from Japan 1902; the Great White Fleet from US 1908. During WWI the German navy had a disturbing presence in the region, and ships such as the *Emden*, and Count von Luckner's feats and adventures were feared and admired, and were well within living memory then. See for example James N. Bade, *Von Luckner: A Reassessment. Count Felix von Luckner in New Zealand and the South Pacific 1917-1919 and 1938*, Peter Lang Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main 2004.



and freight service ship, the MV *MacDhui* which had been servicing Rabaul regularly since May 1931.<sup>85</sup> The *Köln* was the last of the K-class light cruisers built in Wilhelmshaven<sup>86</sup>, and was launched in 1928 by the mayor of Cologne (Köln), Konrad Adenauer, who would later become the first chancellor of the postwar Federal Republic of Germany. On 8 December 1932, with Germany still under the government of the last chancellor of the Weimar Republic, von Schleicher, the *Köln* left the port of Wilhelmshaven for its first major journey abroad. The trip took one year and four days, covered 37000 sea miles and included visits to India, South East Asia, New Zealand and Samoa, Australia, New Guinea, Guam, Japan, China, Greece, Italy and Spain.<sup>87</sup> By the time the *Köln* reached Australia<sup>88</sup> Hitler was in power, and she thus became inadvertently one of the first emissaries of the new National Socialist Germany.

In advance of the visit, rumors abounded in New Guinea. Georg Pilhofer, returning from his holidays in Germany, wrote from Rabaul to missionary Leonhard Flierl, who was in Germany at the time:

Mit den [Katemotec]<sup>89</sup> war ich auch schon 2 Abende zusammen. Sie wußten natürlich schon von meiner Ankunft. Sie sind überhaupt (sic) gut auf dem Laufenden. Daß anfangs Juni der deutsche Kreuzer Köln nach Rabaul kommt, wußten sie auch schon. Du kannst Dir denken, welche Hoffnungen sie daran knüpfen. Man hat immer Mühe, ihnen ihre Gedanken auszureden.<sup>90</sup>

I was already with the [Katemotec] for 2 evenings. They of course already knew about my arrival. They are generally well informed. That the German cruiser Köln will be coming to Rabaul at the beginning of June they already knew, too. You can imagine what hopes they attach to that. It is always an effort to talk them out of their ideas.

The local German newspaper of the city of Cologne, the *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung*, which followed the journey of the cruiser bearing its name with great interest, reported similar enthusiasm amongst the local population about the first German naval presence since WWI:

85 The *Macdhu* was launched 23 December 1930. She commenced trading between Sydney, Papua and New Guinea in May 1931. See [http://mns.ewebs.com/Burns\\_Philp/mv\\_macdhu.htm](http://mns.ewebs.com/Burns_Philp/mv_macdhu.htm).

86 The building cost was 36 million Reichsmark.

87 The *Köln* left on 8.12.1932 and returned on 12.12.1933; for details see for example Gerhard Koop and Klaus-Peter Schmolke, *Die leichten Kreuzer Königsberg, Karlsruhe, Köln, Leipzig, Nürnberg*, Bonn: Bernard und Graefe, 1994. See also <http://members.aol.com/matzi555/leichte-kreuzer-koenigsbergklasse.html>.

88 The *Köln* visited Melbourne for 9 days, from 10 to 19 April 1933, and stopped in Sydney for 10 days, from 6 to 16 May 1933. See reports by Captain Otto Schniewind, 5.5.1933 and 16.5.1933, AA Bonn, R60025/1-Australia: Förderung Deutschum 1927/36. Consul General Asmis reported to the foreign office that the *Köln* had between March and June travelled to Fremantle, Adelaide, Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney, Fidji, and Rabaul. "Visits in all harbours can be assessed as a success." 30.12.1933 Report Dr Asmis to Foreign Office, p 18, File 43515 Jahresberichte der deutschen Auslandsvertretung in Australien, 1929-36, Bundesarchiv Postdam, Foreign Office vol. 16/17.

89 Pilhofer is referring to a group of local New Guineans. I have, however, not managed to decipher this word accurately and identify the group referred to.

90 9.5.1933 Georg Pilhofer to Leonhard Flierl, ND 52/21 L. Flierl.

## Sensation in the Bismark Archipelago.

'The Germans have returned'.

In honor of the cruiser's visit the natives of the previously German Island in New Guinea held a big festivity, they were singing the Song of Germany and asking if the Germans had returned as their masters. ... indeed a chief was even asking the Commander when the return of his land to the Germans was to take place.<sup>91</sup>

The *Rabaul Times*, the only newspaper in Australian New Guinea, in contrast downplayed the political implications of the visit. It described the cruiser as a 'good will ship', and praised its crew—the majority young sailors 'who knew little of the world save the Post-War Germany in which they had been reared as children'—for fostering better understanding and friendship across national borders. The *Köln*, the *Rabaul Times* said, had come as a messenger of post-war peace, healing the divisions WWI had created amongst the white settlers of the Pacific. Yet an undercurrent of unease about how German naval presence would be interpreted amongst the local New Guinean population also permeated the report of the *Rabaul Times*. At the end of the article the readers were presented the opinion of a New Guinean man. The quote addressed the problem of colonial ownership with a subtle affirmation of loyalty to Australia:

The purpose of the 'Koeln's' visit was aptly described by a local native, as he watched the long, grey vessel anchor: 'I t'ink Captain belong ship 'e come shake-hand along government belong me fella.'<sup>92</sup>

Despite these undercurrents the Australian population in New Guinea put their unease about Germany aside to welcome the *Köln*. Months before the *Köln* arrived, 'Territorians' (white settlers in New Guinea) had begun to prepare a befitting reception. A 'Koeln Committee' had been formed to organise entertainment for the crew and locals in and around Rabaul. By April a programme had been drawn up which included a picture show and ball at the Regent Theatre, band performances in the Botanic gardens, and an opportunity to inspect the cruiser.<sup>93</sup> The only 'German' contributions to the festivities were a *singsing* staged by the German Fathers of the Vunapope Mission,<sup>94</sup> and a *Fruehschoppen*, a morning pint, organised by the German Club Rabaul

<sup>91</sup> *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung*, Nr 49, pp.1235-1237, in English translation attached to 7.2.1934 Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, Territories Branch to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, NAA, A518, I 836/2.

<sup>92</sup> *Rabaul Times*, 9 June 1933, 'A Good Will Ship'; NAA, A518, I 836/2.

<sup>93</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 24 April 1933, p. 39.

<sup>94</sup> According to a German report from 1935 the fathers of the Vunapope mission were keen on music and on fostering German language skills and culture:

for 11am 8 June, the second day of the cruiser's stay.<sup>95</sup> Other German Territorians played no major part in the preparations. Their number been reduced by the mass deportations after WWI to just under 400.<sup>96</sup> It might also be that besides being too busy to participate beforehand, many chose to be inconspicuous.<sup>97</sup> Yet when the long-anticipated day of the arrival of the cruiser came many had made the effort to travel to Rabaul and attend the celebrations. Sarah Johnston Chinnery, wife of the Territory's director of District Services and government anthropologist EWP Chinnery, observed the crowd in Rabaul attending dances at the picture house, listening to band performances in the botanical gardens, and sitting on the grass watching a native *singsing* staged by the German Fathers of the Vunapope Mission. The town was buzzing with natives, 'Chinese, Malays, half-castes, whites and German sailors. ... Germans from outstations who hadn't been in Rabaul for years were present.'<sup>98</sup>

The German Club Rabaul had in the postwar years adjusted to the changed political circumstances and a diminished German clientele. On one hand it catered to the nostalgia of those Germans remaining in New Guinea<sup>99</sup>; on the other it found a niche,

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In den Schulen wird wöchentlich 2 Stunden deutscher Unterricht erteilt. Die Kinder in der Mischlings- und Eingeborenen-Schule konnten deutsche Lieder mit deutschem Text singen; die Knaben der Mischlingsschule konnten sich recht gut auf deutsch unterhalten.

2 hours of German lessons are taught in the schools each week. The children in the mixed race and native school were able to sing German songs with German texts; the boys of the mixed race school were able to converse well in German.

See 20 January 1936 Reichsstelle für das Auswanderungswesen to Deutsche Evangelische Kirche, excerpts from confidential report 11.2.1935 by undisclosed source, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin, 5/2906 Neuguinea.

<sup>95</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 24 April 1933, p. 39.

<sup>96</sup> The German department for emigration (Reichsstelle für das Auswanderungswesen) reported that the number of German nationals declined from 579 in 1921 to 377 in 1933, the majority of whom were employed by missions. Only 96 Germans were not in mission employ, and lived everywhere in the Mandated Territory, but a small congregation had formed in Rabaul and the 'gold district'. See 20 January 1936 Reichsstelle für das Auswanderungswesen to Deutsche Evangelische Kirche, excerpts from confidential report 11.2.1935 by undisclosed source, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin, 5/2906 Neuguinea. At the outbreak of war 473 Germans resided in the Territory, of which 412 were employed by missions. (6.12.1941 District Censor, Brisbane to The Controller of Postal and Telegraph Censorship, Melbourne, NAA Melbourne MP 508/1, 52/701/154).

<sup>97</sup> Consul Koeltsch, who visited New Guinea and Papua in November and December 1932 on a private holiday trip he undertook with his wife, commented that the Germans in New Guinea were low in numbers and in a weak economic position. He also asserted that the second generation, those born in New Guinea, had either little or no feeling for 'their old home land'. 'One can in general speak about a decline of Germanness'. 23.1.1933 Report by Consul Koeltsch, Aufzeichnung, Reise nach Neuguinea, AA Bonn, Deutsche Botschaft London, Paket 42: Generalkonsulat Sydney - Personalien Bd. 2 (1932-39).

<sup>98</sup> Sarah Johnston Chinnery, *Malaguna Road. The Papua and New Guinea diaries of Sarah Chinnery*, National Library of Australia, Canberra 1998, p. 117 (entry of 14 June 1933).

<sup>99</sup> A visiting German, pilot Walter Rothe from Dessau, dedicated a nine-verse long poem to the German Club Rabaul, "to You, whom I found as Germans in the South Sea". Verse 7 reads:

which made it an institution in Rabaul, appreciated and frequented beyond the German population. The German club's following by Australians was less a sign of quality entertainment or cultural activities, than an embrace of alcoholic beverage and the fact that it admitted ladies. The German Consul Koeltsch, who visited New Guinea in late 1932 on a private holiday trip, commented that the German Club Rabaul was 'remarkable', as it had 20 German members with voting rights, and 100 Australian members without voting rights.<sup>100</sup> Offering a *Frühshoppen* as its main event, the club managed to satisfy the expectations and needs of both its German and Australian patrons.<sup>101</sup>

In the weeks before the *Köln*'s arrival the German Club approached German Territorians for donations towards its special celebrations. The Club's request for a financial contribution threw the Lutheran mission's superintendent, Stephan Lehner, into a dilemma. If the mission contributed nothing, it would look as if it tried to keep its distance from all things German. If it gave money to the club, it would support indulgence and excess. Lehner resolved to send a generous gift of £ 25 on behalf of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen to the *Köln* directly. In a letter to mission director Epplein, Lehner justified the expense as well as the fact that he had acted without the director's approval. He was, he said, forced to make a quick decision to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation, and there had been no time to contact Germany, Lehner explained:

Die Hauptsache bei dem Deutschen Klub ist im allgemeinen das Trinken. Und waehrend der Festwochen wird es vornehmste Aufgabe sein in diesem Punkte etwas zu leisten. Dafuer aber haben wir keinen Pfennig uebrig. Um nun aber doch nicht in den Ruf zu kommen, als haetten wir unser Deutschum vergessen, beschlossen wir eine Gabe direkt an den Kommandanten zu senden ...<sup>102</sup>

The main thing at the German club is generally drinking. And during the week of celebrations it will be the priority to achieve something in regard to this task. For this, however, we have no penny to spare. But in order not to get the reputation that we have forgotten our Germanness, we decided to send a gift directly to the commander.

Lasst weiter klingen Eure deutsche Weise  
Sprecht weiter Eurer Muttersprache suessen Laut,  
Der Welt koennt Ihr damit stolz beweisen,  
Dass Ihr auf Deutschlands Zukunft wieder baut.

Let further sound your German melodies,  
Continue to speak your mother-tongue's sweet sound,  
So you can prove it to the world with pride,  
that you once again count on Germany's future.

3.9.1930 Walter Rothe, dem Deutschen Klub Rabaul ins Stammbuch, file R57 Neu/1216 DAI, Vereins-Archiv: Australien, Neuseeland, Samoa, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

<sup>100</sup> See 23.1.1933 Report by Consul Koeltsch, Aufzeichnung, Reise nach Neuguinea, AA Bonn, Deutsche Botschaft London, Paket 42: Generalkonsulat Sydney - Personalien Bd. 2 (1932-39). Director Friedrich Epplein, who visited the Club in January 1929 on his return trip to Australia, commented that it had 2/3 British members and put in his diary quotation marks around 'Deutscher Club'. Friedrich Epplein, Lebenserinnerungen Vol. IIb, p. 310.

<sup>101</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 24 April 1933, p. 39.

<sup>102</sup> 10.5.1933 Stefan Lehner to Director Epplein, ND 53/12.

Lehner assured Epplein that the expense was once only, and would not become an annual involvement in local celebrations.

The gift came from the heart. While Lehner stressed to his director the importance of the gesture for the mission's reputation, the letter he sent Schniewind betrayed his sincere and deep emotions. Only a few months earlier in response to 'unsympathetic reports' by the local Patrol Officer, Lehner had in a somewhat clumsy and long-winded argument full of theological language assured the Administration in Rabaul of the mission's loyalty<sup>103</sup>:

we have always recognised the Divine authority of civil power, however constituted, as the power to which is committed whatever external coercive action may be necessary to vindicate righteousness, and we taught our people to do the same

Lehner's message to the *Köln* exhibited a completely different tone:

Hochgeehrter Herr Kommandant!

Seien Sie, sammt all Ihren wackeren Mannen, als ein Grusz aus unserer deutschen Heimat hier in unserer alten deutschen Kolonie herzlich willkommen.

Wir freuen uns für Sie, dasz in Ihrem Kreuzer, der hiesigen Mandatsregierung ein Stück deutscher Technik und in Ihrer Mannschaft deutsche Manneszucht vor Augen geführt wird. Eine Tat, deren Rückwirkung sicher auch uns hier lebenden und wirkenden Missionsleuten zugute kommen wird.

Schade, dasz Sie es nicht möglich machen können am, heute noch deutschesten Eck in Neuguinea, in Finschhafen vorzusprechen.<sup>104</sup>

Most Honourable Commander!

Be cordially welcomed here in our old German colony together with all your brave men, as a greeting from our German home country.

We are pleased that with your cruiser the local government of the mandate is shown a piece of German engineering and with your crew German manly virtues. [This is] an action, the effects of which will surely also benefit us missionaries who live and work here.

A pity that you cannot make it possible to call at Finschhafen, [which is] still today the most German spot in New Guinea.

Lehner summarized the history of the Mission, emphasising its early foundation in 1885, the vast number of natives it looked after, and voiced his regret that no representative of the mission would be able to attend the celebrations in Rabaul.

Da wir aber doch Ihnen, hochverehrter Herr Kommandant einen greifbaren Beweis unserer Mitfreude ob Ihres Erscheinens in der Kolonie, die uns eigentlich rechtlich zugehört, gebe wollen, ein Zeichen, dasz auch in der Ferne unsere Herzen erglühen für unser Deutschland - trotz allem - hoch in Ehren, beschlossen wir Missionsleute Ihnen eine Festgabe von £ 25 zum Besten Ihrer Mannschaft oder eines von Ihnen zu bestimmenden guten Zweckes, zugehen zu lasse.

Because we would like to give to you, most honourable commander, tangible proof of our sharing the joy at your arrival in the colony, which actually rightly belongs to us, a sign that far away, too, our hearts glow for our Germany - despite everything - high in honour, we missionaries decided to send you a special celebration gift of £ 25 for the good of your crew or a good cause to be nominated by you.

Lehner's heartfelt patriotism was confined to his note to Schniewind. Like other Germans in New Guinea the Lutheran mission kept out of the limelight during the visit of the *Köln* in New Guinea, and even refrained from sending a delegation to Rabaul.

103 7.3.1933 Stefan Lehner to The Acting Government Secretary, Rabaul, ND 53/12.

104 10.5.1933 Stefan Lehner to Fregattenkapitän, Kommandant des Kreuzers Köln, ND 53/12.

Lehner's fellow Lutherans in South Australia had voiced similar emotions at the arrival of the cruiser in Adelaide two months earlier, but were less hesitant in making their opinions public. The journal *Kirchenblatt* published a lengthy article entitled 'thoughts on the visit of a war ship'. The arrival of the *Köln*, and the admiration it received, was for them an opportunity to bathe in the reflection of the glory the *Köln* exhibited as part of Germany and German culture, and reassert a pride in heritage suppressed during World War I. The *Kirchenblatt* declared:

Verschwiegen sei auch nicht, daß uns Stolz ankam, als wir etwas Einblick in die wunderbare Technik des Schiffes...erhielten und da merkten, wie unser Stammvolk auch in dieser Beziehung an der Spitze der Völker marschiert.<sup>105</sup>

We also don't want to conceal that we felt proud when we inspected the wonderful engineering of the ship and realised, how in this regard as well our ancestral people marches at the forefront of all peoples.

The reception of the *Köln* by the wider public became the mirror event for Australian and German Lutherans both in Australia and New Guinea to their war and post-war humiliation as well as a long awaited symbol and demonstration of rehabilitation. Relationships between Australians and Germans, they hoped, were slowly normalising. The difference between the Lutherans in Australia, and the Lutherans in New Guinea, however, was that the missionaries saw themselves as Germans, and Germany was 'our ... home country', while the *Kirchenblatt* related to Germany via descent, and thus wrote about it not as a nation, but as the home of the 'ancestral people'.

For the German settlers in New Guinea the arrival of the *Köln* signified something slightly different as well. Germany was not, as for Lehner, a place they were likely to go back to. They did not, like the missionaries, go to Germany on furlough; no German institution required regular reports from them; no children's home or retirement place awaited them in Germany. New Guinea was their home. Their link to Germany was in the past and the arrival of the *Köln* provoked retrospection and nostalgia. Talking to some of these settlers, Hans Fuchs, an officer of the *Köln*, who wrote a book about the ship's travel, was told a story which incorporated Germany's defeat and the loss of New Guinea as a colony into a private account of continuing economic struggles:

Sie erzählen uns von den schweren Zeiten, die sie nach dem Kriege hatten, von der Enteignungsperiode 1921-23, wo allen Pflanzern ihr Eigentum genommen wurde, wo ihnen Schwierigkeiten aller Art bereitet wurden, wo jeder Deutsche mit Weib und Kind verfemt und geächtet war. ... Sie erzählen auch von der jetzigen schweren Krise, von der harten Zeit der Pflanzern, denen die Kobra nichts

They tell us about the hard times they had after the war, about the period of expropriation 1921-23, when property was taken from all planters, when difficulties of all kinds were put in their way, when every German together with wife and child was ostracised and outlawed. ... They tell also about the present tough crisis, about the hard time the planters have, for whom copra yields nothing anymore, in

<sup>105</sup> *Kirchenblatt*, 3.4.1933, No 7, Jg 9, p. 98.

mehr bringt, gegen früheres Wohleben. Nicht mehr  
wie einst wachsen ihnen die Reichtümer in den  
Schoß.<sup>106</sup>

contrast to former good living. It's no longer like  
the past when wealth fell into their laps.

The only place outside the Lutheran mission which showed some interest in the present Germany, and its rise from shame and disgrace to honour and strength was the German Club Rabaul. There its members even flew the new German flag (black, white and red), as well as a Swastika flag.<sup>107</sup> Like Lehner who hoped that the effect of the cruiser's visit would 'surely also benefit us missionaries who live and work here', the German Club had something to gain should officials and other Australians in the territory extend renewed respect and admiration not only to the *Köln* and its crew, but also to other local German institutions.

The *Rabaul Times* proclaimed the visit a 'psychological experiment', which had been 'crowned with deserving success'. The *Rabaul Times*' assessment was partly due to the editor's, Gordon Thomas's, high opinion of Germans,<sup>108</sup> partly to the commander of the *Köln*, Otto Schniewind, and his diplomatic skills.

Kapitän zur See Otto Schniewind, 46 years of age, with a distinguished 26-year career in the German navy, had been chosen well for a mission which demanded diplomacy, tact, and a fine eye for symbolic gestures.<sup>109</sup> On the second day after anchoring in Rabaul harbour, Schniewind, accompanied by members of his crew and the cruiser band, marched from the Botanic Gardens to the cemetery, and there placed a wreath upon the grave of one of the first Australians killed in New Guinea during WWI,

106 Hans Fuchs, *Heimkehr ins Dritte Reich. Die Weltreise des Kreuzers 'Köln' zwischen zwei Epochen der deutschen Geschichte*, Verlag der Dr. Güntzschens Stiftung Dresden 1934, p. 102.

107 Hans Fuchs, *Heimkehr ins Dritte Reich*. p. 102. Hans Fuchs makes no mention where the flag came from. It is possible that it was brought to New Guinea by one of the local Germans earlier, or that it was self made. Judging from Hans Fuchs' whole account of the Pacific tour, it is likely that he would have mentioned it, if members of the *Köln* had given a flag to the club.

108 The editor of the *Rabaul Times*, Gordon Thomas, had lived in New Guinea when it had been still under German rule, and held some very positive opinions about the Germans, especially their firm treatment of 'natives'. See for example *Rabaul Times*, editorial 24 June 1937, where he even suggested that Australian settlers should consider whether 'better treatment might be obtained under the Germany [sic] flag'.

109 Otto Schniewind, born 14.12.1887, had for example been adjutant to the German minister for war (1925-26), and commander of the second torpedo fleet (1928-30). He later became the first Chief of the Naval General Staff, who was in charge of naval operations on the high seas, Admiral Commanding the Fleet (6.12.41-7.31.44) and Commander-in-Chief of Naval Group North. See for example [http://www.deutscheskriegsmarine.de/Willkommen/Personen/hauptteil\\_generala/body\\_hauptteil\\_generala.htm](http://www.deutscheskriegsmarine.de/Willkommen/Personen/hauptteil_generala/body_hauptteil_generala.htm); [http://www.infobitte.de/free/lex/ww2\\_Lex0/s/schniewind.htm](http://www.infobitte.de/free/lex/ww2_Lex0/s/schniewind.htm).

Captain Pockley, who was a medical officer<sup>110</sup> and another wreath on the grave of a German naval officer, Oberleutnant Guelcher, who had died four years before WWI, and whose grave the Administrator had recently relocated from the island of Matupi to the more central Rabaul cemetery. The ceremony was a fine piece of diplomacy honouring Australian and German (war) dead symbolised by the graves of two men connected respectively to Australian and German forces, with neither having been a combatant in WWI. The Administrator chose not to be present in order not to endorse the ceremony as an official one, but instead sent Colonel John Walstab, superintendent of Police, who had a distinguished army record.<sup>111</sup> The returned soldiers' league, the R.S. & S.I.L.A. was represented by several members, including its president, R.L. (Nobby) Clark.<sup>112</sup> Schniewind's speech after the ceremony continued the subtle and careful approach of building bridges, emphasising everything which united him and his hosts, and avoiding everything divisive. The *Rabaul Times* reported:

This action [the relocation of Guelcher's grave] has been greatly appreciated by the Commandant, and after the ceremony was over he expressed his gratitude in a few well-chosen words. He also thanked the returned soldiers' representative for being present and voiced his appreciation 'as coming from one soldier to another'.<sup>113</sup>

Schniewind also made the relocation of Gulcher's grave the central point of a formal farewell and thankyou letter to the Administrator, which was also published in the *Rabaul Times*

I must assure you that this generous gesture has been highly appreciated not only by us-the comrades of Lieutenant Gulcher-but, also, by our people and especially by the whole of the German Navy.<sup>114</sup>

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110 The *Rabaul Times*, 9 June 1933, wrongly reported that Captain Pockley was the first Australian killed after the landing at Kabakaul in September 1914. Captain Brian Colden Antill Pockley was the first medical officer to be killed. The first Australian casualty of the war was Able Seaman W.G.V. Williams RAN.

111 In 1917 Walstab was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, in 1919 Commander of the Order of the British Empire; See records of the Australian War Memorial, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/>; see also NAA, A452, 1959/5863 Walstab, J - Former New Guinea Officer.

112 That Nobby Clark, an ex-serviceman and planter, formally attended the ceremony of Australia's former enemy is only one example of the man's character. In 1942, with nearly all Australian officials evacuated, Clark was amongst the men who surrendered Rabaul to the Japanese. "Insofar as there was a formal end to Australian rule in Rabaul it took place on 23 January when R.L. 'Nobby' Clark (businessman and member of the legislative council), Gordon Thomas (editor of the *Rabaul Times*) and Hector Robinson (from the treasury department) walked into Rabaul under a flag of truce and surrendered." Hank Nelson, 'More than a Change Of Uniform: Australian Military Rule in Papua and New Guinea, 1942-1946', paper presented at the 4th Symposium of the International Research Project *Pacific War in Papua New Guinea* at Rikkyo University on 15-16 December 2001, see <http://members.jcom.home.ne.jp/pwpng/2001symposiumpaper/nelson.htm>.

113 *Rabaul Times*, 9 June 1933, 'Cruiser Koeln Arrives', NAA, A518, I 836/2.

114 11 June 1933 Otto Schniewind to His Honour the Administrator, *Rabaul Times*, (stamp) 16 June 1933, NAA, A518, I 836/2.



The wording was finely chosen, and avoided references to political or national entities, apart from the phrase 'the German navy'. Schniewind thanked 'Your Honour', and the 'inhabitants' of Rabaul for their kindness; neither Germany, nor Australia was mentioned, and the place the *Köln* was visiting was 'Rabaul', not the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

Even the magazine *The Pacific Islands Monthly*, which was far more pro-British and anti-German<sup>115</sup> than the *Rabaul Times*, got swept up in the emotions of the event. Under the headline 'International Courtesies in Rabaul', it reported on the 'good feelings between German naval men and Australians'. The 'discipline and orderliness displayed by all ranks' had been outstanding, Schniewind's words had been 'well-chosen', and the 'town has been en fete ever since the arrival of the cruiser'.<sup>116</sup> But the war, Germany's 'military aggression', and its 'war guilt' were not forgotten as an article in the *Pacific Islands Monthly* a couple of months earlier showed.<sup>117</sup> It asserted that in the likely event of a collapse of the League of Nations, Germany had no right to demand her colonies back. But while the article voiced suspicion that Germany might return to 'monarchism and sabre-rattling', it was prepared to wait and see 'how the Germany now emerging from the chaos of virtual revolution will develop'. A changed Germany, the *Pacific Islands Monthly* said, would be welcome to re-join the brotherhood of colonial nations, as long as neither New Guinea nor any other former German colony would be taken from its present governing nations:

If she is to be a Germany who has learned her lessons in the fires of war and bitter punishment, and who recognises that the British and Germans are not mutually antagonistic, but actually are closer together in national psychology than any other two peoples, and will develop accordingly, then there should be much for Germany to do in the future in the way of colonial development.<sup>118</sup>

The *Köln* arrived at a moment when despite still-existing bitterness about Germany's past deeds and renewed unease about Germany's future political development, there was good will and hope amongst Australians in New Guinea that it was possible to develop calmer, friendlier relationships with a reformed Germany.<sup>119</sup> The *Köln*, and its

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<sup>115</sup> See for example *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 23 1933, pp. 3ff, article 'The Brawl About Mandates'.

<sup>116</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 24 June 1933, p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 23 1933, pp. 3ff, article 'The Brawl About Mandates'.

<sup>118</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 23 1933, pp. 3ff, article 'The Brawl About Mandates'.

<sup>119</sup> The favourable reporting about the *Köln* and its crew stands in contrast to other reports about Germany in the wider Australian press. The German Consul General, Dr Asmis, reported to the foreign office that 'the attitude of the Australian press has since the middle of March been extremely hostile to Germany; and the agitation rose until August...'. 30.12.1933 Dr Asmis to Foreign Office, p. 20, File

'youthful cadets and ratings, who have come ashore eager to learn something about New Guinea'<sup>120</sup>, became the embodiment of what this new Germany might be like. In New Guinea the brotherhood of whiteness still overrode the political concerns that were voiced in Britain, America and Australia in the wake of the German elections in March and the boycott of Jewish retailers in April.<sup>121</sup> With the ascent of the Third Reich, however, this moment was soon to pass, and the young generation of Germans were to turn out as much a disappointment as their fathers. In October 1934 *The Pacific Islands Monthly* reported:

How many complacent Britons in Rabaul are aware that the tail of the British lion has been nipped by the indomitable German eagle? If anyone is interested he is invited to cruise in the middle of Rabaul harbour and train a pair of strong glasses upon the Matupi crater. There, right on the lip of the crater, close under the slowly rising smoke and steam, he will see the letters 'KOLN' outlined in white on black lava. Evidently, when the cheery young officers of the German war-ship Koln were in Rabaul not long ago, they undertook the formidable task of climbing right up to the edge of the crater, and while there, they left this memento of their visit and of their spirit.<sup>122</sup>

The visit of the *Köln* allowed many emotions to find expression. There was a mixture of nostalgia, pride, joy, and satisfaction amongst those who had been identified by Australia as being the enemy during WWI. Germany had sent an emissary that made Australians realise that to be German meant to be disciplined, courteous, and virtuous. The *Köln*, a weapon of war, was also tangible prove that the 'Huns' were not only at a par with British engineering, but superior.

For Australians living in New Guinea, where so many of the male population were WWI veterans, the recognition and honouring of the war dead, and the implicit recognition of Australia's right to administer and 'own' New Guinea came as a welcome sign of peace and post-war stability. The war was then still too vividly remembered to yearn for anything but peace, and the impact of the depression which was still being felt with all its debilitating and disturbing consequences, made stability and international co-operation desirable. Also, justification for grand celebrations only occurred every so often, and the white settlers, forging a life in New Guinea, were keen to show the world, even if it came to them in the form of a German navy cruiser, that they could mount festivities as grand and civilised as any other western community.

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43515 Jahresberichte der deutschen Auslandsvertretung in Australien, 1929-36, Bundesarchiv Postdam, Foreign Office vol. 16/17.

<sup>120</sup> *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 24 June 1933, p. 11.

<sup>121</sup> See for example Saul Friedlaender, *The Years of Persecution*, pp. 18-25.

<sup>122</sup> *The Pacific Islands Monthly*, 17 October 1934, p. 12.

The arrival of the *Köln* created a carnivalesque moment of openness and unpunished transgression, where Rabaul was, as Sarah Chinnery described, buzzing with natives, Chinese, Malays, half-castes, whites, and German sailors, and German settlers felt they could be present, too. Celebrating together, everybody busily avoided talking about the war. The visit of the *Köln* concealed existing tensions. The only ones talking openly about colonial rule and its legitimacy were fictitious natives onto whom German and Australian newspapers projected what they desired to say aloud. Questions raised by New Guineans about the colonial order were drowned out in the noise of the dance music, brass bands, and sing-sings. Yet the Administrator's decision not to take part in any of the celebrations recognised this hardly audible murmur; to counter the impact the *Köln*'s visit could have on 'the native mind', neither New Guineans nor Germans were to be left in any doubt as to who was in control. The Administrator thus asserted by his absence that Australia was the rightful authority ruling New Guinea.

The German consulate reciprocated. While the German consul in New Zealand travelled on board the *Köln* from Wellington to Apia,<sup>123</sup> no member of the German consulate attended the ceremonies in Rabaul. This absence was part of Dr Rudolf Asmis's policy towards the Mandated Territory of New Guinea throughout the 1930s. Asmis as German Consul General for Australia and New Zealand never visited New Guinea, and apart from two visits in 1932 and 1936, neither did any other representative of the consulate.<sup>124</sup> Asmis was very careful not to upset the Australian government, and

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123 See *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 23 March 1933, p. 5. The attendance of the consul is even more remarkable, as New Zealand was part of Consul General Asmis's jurisdiction.

124 In November and December 1932 Consul Költzsch and his wife went on a private holiday trip to Papua and New Guinea, during which he also dealt with some official matters. See 24.8.1932 Dr Asmis to Mr Martius, AA Bonn, R60025 1-Australien: Foerderung des Deutschtums 1927/1936 and 23.1.1933 Report by Consul Koeltzsch, Aufzeichnung, Reise nach Neuguinea, AA Bonn, Deutsche Botschaft London, Paket 42: Generalkonsulat Sydney - Personalien Bd. 2 (1932-39). In 1936 Consul Walter Hellenthal undertook an official visit to New Guinea, during which he encouraged the founding of NSDAP strongholds in Wau, Rabaul and Finschhafen. See Christine Winter, 'The Long Arm of the Third Reich: Internment of New Guinea Germans in Tatura', in *Journal of Pacific History* Volume 38, Number 1 / JUNE 2003, p. 85. In 1938 Dr Asmis visited Papua, but not New Guinea. In annual reports of the German Consul General between 1929 and 1933 New Guinea is always only very briefly mentioned, mostly in one paragraph. See File 43515 Jahresberichte der deutschen Auslandsvertretung in Australien, 1929-36, Bundesarchiv Postdam, Foreign Office vol. 16/17. John Perkins, who has come to different conclusions, argues that German consuls visited New Guinea often, and that this reflected a vivid interest of the German government in New Guinea. See for example Perkins, J. A. 2001, 'The Swastika among the Coconuts: Nazism in New Guinea in the 1930s', in *Fascism Outside Europe*, ed Stein Ugelvik Larsen, University Press, New York, Columbia, pp.287-309.

avoided gestures which could have been interpreted as Germany making claims on its former colony New Guinea.<sup>125</sup>

Despite Asmis and Schniewind's diplomacy, the Australian government was not entirely convinced. Amongst the papers and documents dealing with the visit of the *Köln* the Territories Branch of the Prime Minister's Department placed an English translation of a German newspaper report, announcing the 'sensation' that 'the Germans have returned' to the Bismark Archipelago.<sup>126</sup> For the nervous Australians, not only had the Third Reich started aggressively to dismantle the Treaty of Versailles, but Japan's announcement that it would leave the League of Nations in response to the League's disapproval of the annexation of Manchuria in 1931 opened up the possibility that the entire mandate-order in the Pacific could be thrown into renegotiations.

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125 The questions whether Germany wanted New Guinea back as a colony, which for example John Perkins asserts still deserves more detailed research. While publicly the German government and the German press hardly ever mentioned the Pacific, but kept insisting that *all* former colonies should be returned to Germany, the Reichs-Chancellery had noted internally already in April 1933 that Germany had no interest in getting any former colonies in the Pacific back—good relations with Japan were the priority (see File note 8.4.1933 Der Staatssekretär in the Reichskanzlei, File R43I/626a Kolonien 1932-35, Bundesarchiv Koblenz). The archival material I have seen seems to indicate that throughout the first half of the 1930s Pacific colonies were seen as a bargaining tool for acquiring a colonial empire in central Africa. (See for example Bundesarchiv Koblenz, File R43I/626a; for further considerations by the German government in 1933 and 1935 about Japan leaving the League of Nations and the future of former German colonies see file R31246, Archives of the Foreign Office, Bonn). The founding of NSDAP strongholds in New Guinea and Samoa in 1936, however, complicates the problem. Possible explanations are that this was indeed a preparation for a take-over of these colonies by Germany, or that this was a push by the NSDAP's AO (*Auslandsorganisation*, organisation of the party abroad) to strengthen its organisation. Personally I tend towards the latter, and see it connected with an attempt by Consul Dr Walter Hellenthal to take over Asmis's position as Consul General. In 1937 Asmis on return from Germany managed to have Dr Becker, the leader of the NSDAP in Australia, replaced, and Hellenthal, a dedicated National Socialist consul, who had initiated the New Guinea strongholds, transferred to New Zealand. My guess is that Asmis outmanoeuvred both Becker and Hellenthal, and turned a push by the AO for dominance to his advantage. In 1938 Dr Asmis set out his own plans for Germany's colonial future to his superior in the foreign office in Berlin, reiterating in the process briefings and policy directions he had received earlier from the foreign office. Asmis stated that German policy regarded a central-African empire as the priority, and planned to trade all other colonies for this. (Archive of the Foreign Office, Bonn, Papers of Dr Asmis, Parcel 7, No. III/19.). That Asmis did not think New Guinea would be a German colony again is supported by observations by Theile during the mid-1930s. In response to statements from missionaries in the field that New Guinea would become a German colony again, Theile visited Asmis in Sydney in 1935 to enquire about the matter. In August 1936 Theile wrote from London, during a stop-over on his return trip from Germany to Australia, to Wilhelm Flierl: 'In Sydney I asked the Consul General about the matter and he told me as his personal opinion that Germany was not interested in obtaining New Guinea again. At that time I also noticed with interest that my newspaper from Germany, although it continually contained articles on the colonial question, and gave lists of the colonies whose return was desired, never included New Guinea among them. I have been to the Foreign Office, and there also I was told, cautiously but quite definitely enough for me, that Germany was not interested in obtaining New Guinea again. They did not want to be so close to the Japanese, and to be 'stuck' between the Japanese and the Australians.' 28.8. 1936 Theile to W. Flierl, translation quoted in AWM 54, 883/4/12.

126 *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung*, Nr 49, pp. 1235-1237, in English translation attached to 7.2.1934 Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, Territories Branch to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, NAA, A518, I 836/2.

The visit of the *Köln* brought Lehner's patriotism and nationalism to the fore. He was a German patriot, longing for a return of New Guinea to Germany. This desire, however, did not diminish Lehner's pragmatism in dealing with the situation at hand. New Guinea was a Mandated Territory under Australian control, and the mission had to avoid offending the Administration. Looking at the different letters he sent to Eppelein, Schniewind, and the Administrator, it is obvious that Lehner was conscious of what he was doing, and pragmatic in the way he went about it. Lehner ensured that all potentially conflicting parties were satisfied with the mission's conduct. The director in Germany was assured that no money was squandered frivolously. The Administration was spared doubt about the mission's loyalty, as it did not openly participate in any of the celebrations. Fellow Germans could not accuse the mission of stinginess or un-Germanness, as it had sent a gift to the *Köln* directly. The *Köln*, Germany's emissary, carried evidence of the mission's patriotism with it - and who knew, there might come a time in the future - in Germany or in New Guinea - where the mission would need such evidence. Pilhofer's character judgement about Lehner was right. Lehner was, as Pilhofer had complained to Theile in 1931, good at arbitration.<sup>127</sup> His patriotism sat side by side with his Lutheranism, which he understood transcended national identity. While Lehner proudly proclaimed that Finschhafen was 'still the most German spot in New Guinea', he opposed the making of a solely German-controlled mission: 'The thought that in the future the unified organisation will be separated ... is terrible for me'. Both sets of emotionally loaded identities were contradictory, and led to contradictory desires. Lehner had compartmentalised his patriotism from his Lutheranism, and neither identity challenged or transformed the other.<sup>128</sup>

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127 1.7.1931 Pilhofer to Theile, UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Correspondence Missionaries & Theile.

128 Stefan Lehner did not join the NSDAP stronghold in Finschhafen, despite the missionaries being told by Consul Hellenthal in 1936 that should New Guinea be returned to Germany in the near future all non-party members would be expelled. See for example Christine Winter, 'The Long Arm of the Third Reich: Internment of New Guinea Germans in Tatura', in *Journal of Pacific History* Volume 38, Number 1, June 2003, p. 85.

## Neuendettelsau in Control?

It was as if God himself had smoothed the way.  
*Es war als wenn Gott selber die Wege geebnet haette.*

Theile to Eppelein (15.1.1934)

While the Neuendettelsauer leadership was still in honeymoon mood in Germany, Theile was busy organising the separation of the American and German mission fields in New Guinea so that Neuendettelsau could take over full control of its old mission. The negotiations in Columbus, Ohio, had settled the division of the mission field, the problem of re-deployment of staff, and the splitting of finances and assets between the former Lutheran partners. The Australian government had already given permission for German staff to enter and work in the Mandated Territory in 1927. There remained the vexed problem of securing Neuendettelsau's former property in New Guinea.

After the Brisbane negotiations in 1929, when it was decided by all involved mission partners that the Rheinische Mission would take over its old Madang mission field, several attempts to have its former property re-transferred had been unsuccessful. While the Commonwealth government approved the transfer of 'missionary activities' to the Rheinische Mission, it decided that the provisions of the 1926 Ordinance would not be altered: the property was to remain vested in the board of trustees.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, at the beginning of 1933, Theile proposed a solution to the government that would allow the splitting of the property between the Madang and Finschhafen missions within the existing regulations. Theile argued that problems had arisen with the board of trustees for the Lutheran Missions which were entirely 'our fault'. The board, he said, was too large and cumbersome. Would the government permit the trustees to resign and two boards of trustees to be formed, as for the Catholic missions in the Territory? This would simplify administrative matters, especially as there had been a re-organisation of the Lutheran Missions about which the government had been informed by Theile a few

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<sup>129</sup> 9.6.1931 JH Starling, Assistant Secretary, Territories Branch, Prime Minister's Department to The Hon. Sir L.E. Groom. NAA, A518, B838/1 Pt 2. Prior to Groom's enquiry on behalf of Rev. Heuer, the German Consul General's request in 1929, and Theile's request in 1930 to have the Madang mission's property given back to its original owner had both been declined. See 15.5.1931 Groom to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 28.3. Memorandum Prime Minister's Department 'German Missions in New Guinea' and 1933 19.4.1933 Minute for Cabinet, Agenda No. 549. NAA, A518, B838/1 Pt 2. See also 21.3.1933 Theile to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department (copy), ND 53/31.

months previously.<sup>130</sup> Theile's proposal posed no problem to the government, and was on a smooth and steady path through all relevant agencies—the Prime Minister's Department, the Administration in Rabaul, and the Attorney General's Department—when it came to a sudden halt.

To help Theile argue Neuendettelsau's case in Australia, Friedrich Eppelein had undertaken enquiries of his own amongst fellow German Protestant mission societies in similar circumstances. Was mission property returned to any society operating in a Mandated Territory under British control, and had §438 of the Peace Treaty of Versailles been any hindrance? The Australian government, Eppelein explained, argued that §438 meant that property had to be administered by boards of trustees. To Eppelein's delight it transpired that the Protestant Swiss-German Mission society in Basel had already in 1925 regained all property rights in the Mandated Territory of Cameroon<sup>131</sup>, while for German Mission Societies in Tanganyika—the Leipzig, Berlin and Bethel Missions—the return of property was in its final stages.<sup>132</sup> An Ordinance for the Mandated Territory of Tanganyika had been issued in 1931, which set out the dissolution of all Boards of Trustees, and instructed the governor of the Territory to 'restore property to its original owners' after they had become incorporated under the local law. Eppelein immediately informed Theile, who sent a long letter to the Prime Minister's Department as an addition to his earlier request.<sup>133</sup> Theile summarised the information he had received about Cameroon and Tanganyika, and asked the department whether 'the way may be clear also to follow along the lines taken in Tanganyika Territory', as the Lutheran Mission would shortly be a body of recognised

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130 19.1.1933 Theile to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department; 30.11.1932 Theile to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department. (a copy was also sent to the Administrator in Rabaul). In his November letter Theile set out the changes, detailing the collaboration of the UELCA and the ALC up to 1929, the Brisbane negotiations and its consequences, as well as the most recent agreements made in Columbus, Ohio. The ALC and Neuendettelsau would take over 'sole and direct control' of respectively the Madang and Finschhafen fields, and the government was asked to take 'cognisance of the above and approve of whatever alterations have thus been brought about.' NAA, A518, B838/1 Pt 2.

131 28.1.1933 Eppelein to Direktorium, Evang. Missionsgesellschaft Basel; 30.1.1933 Karl Hartenstein to Eppelein. ND 26/31-1. Hartenstein advised Eppelein to seek assistance from the International Missionary Council, as Basel had. Especially Oldham and Paton had been very helpful.

132 24.1.1933 Eppelein to Direktorium, Evang. Luth. Mission zu Leipzig; 27.1.1933 Weishaupt to Eppelein. ND 26/21. Weishaupt referred Eppelein to Excellence Hahl's interpretation of §438, according to which the boards of trustees were meant to be an interim measure to protect the misuse of mission property for other purposes, and thus, according to Hahl, §438 did not specify that German mission societies were forever precluded from property control.

133 21.3.1933 Theile to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2 and ND 53/31.

legal standing. A draft memorandum together with Articles of Association was already before the Registrar of Companies in Rabaul.

Instead of simply dividing one board into two, the department was suddenly faced with a request with far-reaching implications, necessitating major changes in policy and law. It thus asked the Administration in Rabaul for advice and further information,<sup>134</sup> and handed the matter over to Cabinet. Theile's proposal had been the first request for a return of German mission property to the former owner, but in view of the action taken by Great Britain, and considering that 15 years had elapsed since the war, the Administrator thought 'Cabinet may desire to consider' the issue of property of German Missions in New Guinea.<sup>135</sup>

The Administrator, Brigadier-General Thomas Griffith, left the department in no doubt that he was not impressed with Theile's new proposal. While he had no objections to dividing the Lutheran Missions' Board of trustees into two, he could not see the additional need for a re-transfer of the mission's property:

I do not consider it necessary to grant any special concession to the Lutheran Mission over and above that granted to other denominations, and it is pointed out that the 'other' German Missions have appointed Trustees and ... have not encountered difficulties as the Lutheran Missions seem to be doing.<sup>136</sup>

To underline that Theile's claims had been somewhat exaggerated, and that Theile was incompetent in legal matters, Griffith attached correspondence of the Registrar of Companies in Rabaul to Theile. In it the registrar pointed out that 'a considerable amount of correspondence' had passed in reference to these matters, and by now the requirements of the Companies legislation should be known to Theile. The registrar was not in a position to 'afford you assistance directed towards the actual formation of any proposed company', and advised Theile to deal with a solicitor.<sup>137</sup>

Despite the Administration's reluctance to consider any alterations to the status quo, Cabinet decided that it had no objection to changing the way the property of German

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<sup>134</sup> 7.4.1933 Secretary, Prime Minister's Department to Administrator, Rabaul. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

<sup>135</sup> 19.4.1933 For Cabinet, Agenda No. 549: New Guinea - Property of German Missions. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

<sup>136</sup> 27.4.1933 T. Griffith, Administrator to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

<sup>137</sup> 17.3.1933 B Baker, Registrar of Companies, Companies Office, Rabaul to Theile. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.



Missions was looked after. After seeking advice from the Attorney General's Department and the Department for Foreign Affairs, and new discussions between the Minister (CWC Marr) and the Administrator, it was decided to repeal the German Missions Ordinance of 1926.<sup>138</sup> The Attorney General's Department was instructed to draft a new ordinance 'with a view to vesting in the Missions the property in New Guinea which at present is held by Boards of Trustees.'<sup>139</sup> After months of delay, and various requests from the Prime Minister's department to 'please expedite',<sup>140</sup> the Attorney General's Department came back not with a draft ordinance, but a new solution to the problem:

It is suggested that, if practicable, it would be more satisfactory if the German Missions obtained incorporation under the existing Companies law of the Territory prior to action being taken to re-vest the property in them, and that the Administrator be asked to confer with the missions to that end.<sup>141</sup>

The memorandum continued that the 'actual constitution of the bodies' was one 'primarily for the missions themselves and I do not offer any opinion on the matter', but hidden in 'the Companies Ordinance of Papua, in its application to the Territory' the memorandum mentioned, was the provision, that a two-third majority of share holders of any incorporated body had to be British subjects. While the Attorney-General's Department's advice followed the Tanganyika solution—incorporation was to be a prerequisite—its intentions differed from the original Cabinet decision. Instead of vesting the property with its original owners, the property would be handed over to new entities, which were subject to local law and prohibited from German majority control. 'If the missions were so re-constituted', the Attorney-General's Department said, 'the property at present held by the Boards of Trustees might then by Ordinance be specifically vested in the new bodies.'

The Administration in New Guinea accordingly offered all German Missions a choice: they could either obtain incorporation under the existing Companies law of the Territory, or keep the Boards of Trustees. If they opted for incorporation the property 'might then by Ordinance be specifically vested in the new body'. If they kept the Boards of Trustees, the Administration would consider removing 'all outside control of

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<sup>138</sup> See various Memoranda and correspondence in NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

<sup>139</sup> 27.9.1933 Prime Minister's Department to Attorney General. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

<sup>140</sup> 6.12.1933 Prime Minister's Department to Attorney General's Department, 19.12.1933 Prime Minister's Department to Attorney General's Department, 9.1.1934 Prime Minister's Department to Attorney General's Department. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

<sup>141</sup> 31.1.1934 Second Assistant Secretary, Attorney-General's Department - Memorandum for The Secretary, Prime Minister's Department. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2.

the appointment of trustees', so that 'any vacancy on a Board would then be filled by a person appointed by the trustees'.<sup>142</sup>

Theile faced a dilemma. The Neuendettelsauer society insisted on legal and financial control, but the Administration had set parameters for the incorporation which made outside control by a German society unattainable. In July 1933 Theile travelled to New Guinea—his fourth trip to the field since he took over responsibility for the missions in the wake of WWI—and set out to achieve the impossible. He stayed three weeks in Rabaul as guest of the Administrator, discussed various problems and challenges the Administration faced, visited facilities of the Methodist, Catholic and Adventist missions in the surrounding area, and finalised the incorporation of the Finschhafen mission, which he had attempted to get organised in vain for over a decade. Theile reported to Eppelein:

Als ich nun diesmal in Rabaul war, ging alles so glatt, so einfach, dass ich mich verwundert frage, warum konnte das nicht laengst so durchgefuehrt werden? Es war als wenn Gott selber die Wege geebnet haette.<sup>143</sup>

When I was in Rabaul this time, everything went so smoothly, so easily, that I asked myself with amazement, why could this not have been done long ago? It was as if God himself had smoothed the way.

Theile rejected suggestions by the Administration that incorporation without shareholders under the guarantee of a bank of business, such as Burns Philp & Co, was easiest, and insisted that the mission was to be independent.

To fulfil the law a minimum capital of £50 was needed, divided into 50 shares, and a minimum of 7 shares had to be given out. As two-thirds of the shareholders had to be British subjects, and an annual meeting had to take place, Theile selected, apart from himself, two German missionaries, Stephan Lehner and Wilhelm Flierl, and four Australians: Hermann Miers, Paul Helbig, Adolf Obst, and David Rohrlach. All but Theile were staff of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen. Out of these seven, four were

<sup>142</sup> 10.11.1934 D.S. Wanliss, Deputy Administrator to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2. The latter offer sounded generous, but only applied to Protestant Missions, as the Apostolic Legate had power of nomination for all board members of Catholic missions already. See 21.4.1933 Minute, Secretary, Attorney General's Department. NAA, A518, B 838/1 Pt. 2. (The department commented that having no right of nomination 'may or may not constitute a disadvantage in the case of the latter [Protestant] missions.') And as by then, the end of 1934, both the Rheinische and Neuendettelsauer Missions had finalised their incorporation, it actually only concerned the Liebenzeller Mission.

<sup>143</sup> 15.1.1934 Theile to Eppelein, Bericht ueber meine 4. Reise nach Neu Guinea, UELCA-New Guinea Minutes and Reports, p. 6 (39 pages).

appointed directors.<sup>144</sup> The managing director would always be the mission's superintendent.<sup>145</sup> Theile assured Eppelein that these were only formalities. Even though control rested nominally with the shareholders, Theile had found a way of placing the newly incorporated mission-company firmly under Neuendettelsau's control:

Die Hauptsache ist ..., dass ich in den Hauptteil der Eingabe um Registrierung einsetzen lasse, dass das Ziel der Gesellschaft ist, die Ausbreitung der lutherischen Kirche in Neu Guinea gemaess der Satzung der Neuendettelsauer Mission. Durch diesen Ausdruck setze ich die neue registrierte Gesellschaft unter die Bestimmungen der Heimatleitung. Die Gesellschaft und ihre Direktoren koennen nicht nach Willkuer verfahren, sondern nur nach den Ordnungen und Bestimmungen der Heimatleitung, das bedeutet natuerlich ebensoviel, als dass die Heimatleitung Besitzerin des Eigentums ist, dasselbe nur durch ein Komitee auf dem Felde verwalten laesst.<sup>146</sup>

The most important thing is ..., that I have had put into the main part of the submission to government, that the aim of the society is the spreading of the Lutheran church in New Guinea according to the articles of association of the Neuendettelsauer Mission. Through this phrase I put the newly registered company under the regulations of the home leadership. The company and its directors cannot act arbitrarily, but only in accordance with the orders and regulations of the home leadership, which of course means that the home leadership is the owner of the property, but only has it administered by a committee on the field.

To address the potential of a conflict between the directorship of the incorporated mission and the leadership in Neuendettelsau, Theile added another structural safeguard. Only documents signed by the chairman of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen were legally valid. The chairman of the incorporated mission in turn always had to be the superintendent, appointed by Neuendettelsau. Enshrining a personal union of chairman and superintendent, Theile fused Neuendettelsau's articles

144 Lehner, Theile, W. Flierl and H. Miers. After Mier's sudden death his share was given to Behrendorff, an Australian lay worker, and Adolf Obst was made one of the directors. At the point of departing from New Guinea Theile quit as chairman, and transferred this position to Lehner. See 15.1.1934 Theile to Eppelein, Bericht ueber meine 4. Reise nach Neu Guinea, UELCA-New Guinea Minutes and Reports, p. 7.

145 In the official Memorandum and Articles of Association Stephan Lehner, Friedrich Otto Theile, Wilhelm Flierl and Hermann Miers are named as Directors. See Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, Rabaul printing Works, printers, Rabaul, p. 8. NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt 1.

146 11.8.1933 Theile, Rabaul to Friedrich Eppelein. ND 53/31. The Lutheran Mission Finschhafen was officially registered on 26 October 1933. See Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, Rabaul printing Works, printers, Rabaul, NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt 1. Georg Pilhofer in his history of the Neuendettelsauer Mission uses Theile's letter to Eppelein (11.8.1933) to narrate the change in property rights, but not Theile's final report of 15 January 1934, nor the official Articles of Association. The final sentence in the official Memorandum of Association binding the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen to Neuendettelsau differs slightly from that given by Theile to Eppelein in his progress report. 'The objects for which the Company is established are:- (a) To promote the interests of the Lutheran Church in the said Territory according to the tenets of the Neuendettelsau Mission Society.' (See Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, Rabaul printing Works, printers, Rabaul, p. 1. NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt 1). Pilhofer, like Theile, misses that this was only the first step for a re-transfer of property. See Pilhofer, *Die Geschichte der Neuendettelsauer Mission in Neuguinea*, Vol. 2 p. 111. See also Gordon Gerhardy, 'Some specific observations on Partnership Involving the Australian Church', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 97, footnote 149.

of association with the Articles of Association of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen.<sup>147</sup> Neuendettelsau was, albeit in a roundabout way, in control of its field.

Neuendettelsau agreed that these were only final formalities. The important changes had been decided during the Columbus negotiations. Thus before the matter of incorporation and mission property was finalised the mission society already had a legal document prepared<sup>148</sup>, valid from 1.1.1933 on, detailing Theile's authority as representative and general agent of the Neuendettelsauer Mission in Australia. The document set out some rights and responsibilities as being solely Theile's, while others were shared between the society in Germany and Theile, and between the field's superintendent and Theile. Basically all matters in regard to the Australian mainland, such as dealings with the Commonwealth government and the Australian Lutheran church (UELCA), all financial matters, and the supervision of missionaries travelling through or staying in Australia, were Theile's responsibilities. But supervision of staff in New Guinea was described as 'co-supervision'. Theile was also authorized to deal with the Administration in New Guinea, but only in so far as the respective field superintendent of the mission field was himself unable to arrange certain affairs with the Administration. The authority Neuendettelsau gave to Theile clarified and simplified his status and rights in regard to the Australian Lutheran church. It also acknowledged Theile's central role in negotiating with the Australian government and managing Neuendettelsau's financial affairs in Australia. Yet it was unclear about his relationship with the Administration in New Guinea and with the mission's superintendent. Were staff in New Guinea bound to follow Neuendettelsau's directions via Theile's orders, or would the superintendent be dealing with Neuendettelsau directly? This ambiguity indicated that Neuendettelsau was not able simply to take over its old mission again. Since the outbreak of WWI the political realities had changed. New Guinea was not a German colony any more, but administered by Australia; and while Neuendettelsau was keen to assert itself as much as possible in regard to the actual mission field, past experience had shown that Theile's intervention might be necessary from time to time. The document setting out Theile's authority was thus an amalgam of the pre-WWI structure and interim structures developed since then, and left the field in a strange situation, partly controlled by Neuendettelsau, partly by Theile,

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<sup>147</sup> See 15.1.1934 Theile to Eppelein, Bericht ueber meine 4. Reise nach Neu Guinea, UELCA-New Guinea Minutes and Reports, p. 7.

<sup>148</sup> Prepared by Dr Streicher, a lawyer in Nuernberg. Generalvollmacht, ND 53-31.

and partly self-managed under the leadership of the superintendent appointed by Neuendettelsau.

The actual structure of the incorporated Lutheran Mission Finschhafen added to this ambiguity. As Theile understood it, Neuendettelsau was in charge, and the directors of the mission-company in New Guinea could not act arbitrarily, but must act according to 'the tenets of the Neuendettelsau Mission Society'. At the same time Neuendettelsau could only exercise their rights, especially property rights, through 'a committee on the field'. The incorporation strengthened the power of the staff in New Guinea, especially of the superintendent. If Neuendettelsau was ever faced with a conflict between itself and the field, especially over legal matters, it could not intervene directly, as under the rules of the incorporation in the Mandated Territory all power lay with the chairman. It would have to take drastic action and replace the superintendent.

In all the excitement, however, of outwitting bureaucracy and bringing Neuendettelsau back in control despite the limitations of the laws regulating incorporations of companies, Theile had overlooked one small but crucial detail. The German Missions Ordinance 1926 of New Guinea had not been revoked and no new Ordinance had been put in place. In fact, none of the former German Mission property was handed over to the newly re-constituted mission companies for years. The Administrator, by 1934 Sir Walter Ramsey McNicoll, decided not to change the 1926 Ordinance until all former German Missions had been incorporated. In 1937 finally the Legislative Council of the Territory passed new ordinances for four of the Catholic Missions, the Mission of the Divine Word, the Mission of the Holy Ghost, the Mission of the Sacred Heart and the Marist Mission. Ordinances for the two Lutheran Missions, the Lutheran Mission Madang, and the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, were delayed until the situation of the Liebenzell Mission had been clarified, and were only passed by legislative Council on 5 September 1939. But with the war intervening they were not submitted for the Governor General's assent. Thus the property of the former Neuendettelsauer Mission in New Guinea was never transferred to the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen incorporated, but remained legally vested with the board of trustees set up in 1926, and was thus ultimately under the Administrator's control.

Both the mission and the government only became aware of the confusion in 1939. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the Department of Home and Territories contacted

McNicoll, with a request from the UELCA to take over a mission boat from the German Lutheran Mission at Finschhafen. The staff, looking through their departmental files, found themselves confused about the legal situation.<sup>149</sup> There was an ordinance from 1926 covering the Lutheran Mission of the Rheinische Mission society; did this ordinance also cover the Lutheran Mission in the Finschhafen area? There was further mention of an entity called Lutheran Missions New Guinea. Was this the same as the Australian Lutheran Mission New Guinea for which an ordinance was in preparation?<sup>150</sup> The departmental staff asking for McNicoll's approval for transfer of ownership got the unexpected answer that there was no case for a take over, as neither the boat, nor anything belonging to the respective mission was enemy property.<sup>151</sup> The Department's confusion was mirrored by that of JJ Stolz, president of the UELCA. After the declaration of war Stolz suggested to Theile to do the same as the UELCA had done at the outbreak of WWI: inform the Australian Government that the church would take over the German mission. Theile replied that this was not advisable. Insofar as the Australian Government was concerned Theile and the UELCA had been in control of the mission all the time.<sup>152</sup>

In January 1933 Neuendettelsau took over control of the mission field regardless. Unambiguously it declared in August 1933 in its annual report, which celebrated and showcased its work at home and abroad:

So hat denn Neuendettelsau seit dem 1. Januar 1933 seine Mission voll und ganz wider in eigener Verwaltung und Verantwortung.<sup>153</sup>

Thus since the 1 January 1933 Neuendettelsau has its mission totally and fully under its own management and responsibility.

149 See 24.1.1940 Memo Prime Minister's Department; 19.4.1940 Secretary (Strahan) to McNicoll, Administrator Rabaul; 24.5.1940 McNicoll to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt. 1.

150 The Australian Lutheran Mission was an enterprise of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (ELSA), and was set up to take over the island Rooke-Siassi from the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen in 1936. War intervened in the passing of the respective ordinance, which was eventually finalised in 1947, and again in 1950. Thus in effect 14 years after missionaries of the ELSA started working at Rooke the legal procedures were completed. See NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt. 1. See also Herwig Wagner, *Beginnings at Finschhafen*, Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 55.

151 11.12.1939 McNicoll to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt. 1.

152 11.9.1939 Theile an J.J. Stolz. Lutheran Archives Adelaide, UELCA - NG Correspondence: Theile F.O. - Stolz J.J.

153 Friedrich Eppelein (ed.), *Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und seine 4 Arbeitsgebiete. Bericht 1933 der Gesellschaft fuer Innere und Aeussere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche, Neuendettelsau August 1933*. Eppelein sent the 1933 volume to all relevant government officials and ministers in Germany, including Schemm. In his accompanying letter to Schemm Eppelein wrote:

Throughout the years from 1933 to 1939 when the Neuendettelsauer society was 'in control' of its mission field, it operated with two related but distinct set of structures. The German government and the community of foreign mission societies in Germany and abroad understood the Finschhafen mission to be that of the Neuendettelsauer society. The German Protestant mission board negotiated on Neuendettelsau's behalf with the German government for allocation of foreign exchange, and statistics about German foreign missions included Neuendettelsau and its field.<sup>154</sup> The only one uninformed about the fact that Neuendettelsau was in control of its mission field was the Australian government. It regarded the Finschhafen mission to be under Australian control under the directorship of Theile. Even the Australian security services, which stepped up their surveillance of Germans and their supporters in the wake of the Munich crisis in 1938, did not establish a dossier on the society in Germany, but focused on Theile, and his suspiciously large correspondence with Germany.<sup>155</sup>

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Gestatte mir auch Ihnen unser eben erschienenen Buch 'Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und seine 4 Arbeitsgebiete zu unterbreiten. ... Die vielen Beziehungen zwischen der Neuendettelsauer Missionsanstalt und deren Sendboten im Auslande verleihen diesem Werk auch keine geringe außenpolitische Bedeutung. Es ist unserer Missionsleitung ein ernstes Anliegen, vor unseren Sendboten im Ausland mit Freudigkeit und Deutlichkeit einzutreten für den neuen Staat und damit unserem Volk und Vaterland und unserem Führer zu dienen.

I am pleased to also give to you our book 'Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und seine 4 Arbeitsgebiete', which has just been published. ... The many connections between the Neuendettelsauer mission society and its emissaries abroad also bestow upon this society no minor significance in regard to foreign politics. It is an earnest concern of our mission leaders to argue for our new nation joyfully and decidedly to our emissaries abroad, and thus serve our Volk and Fatherland and our Führer.

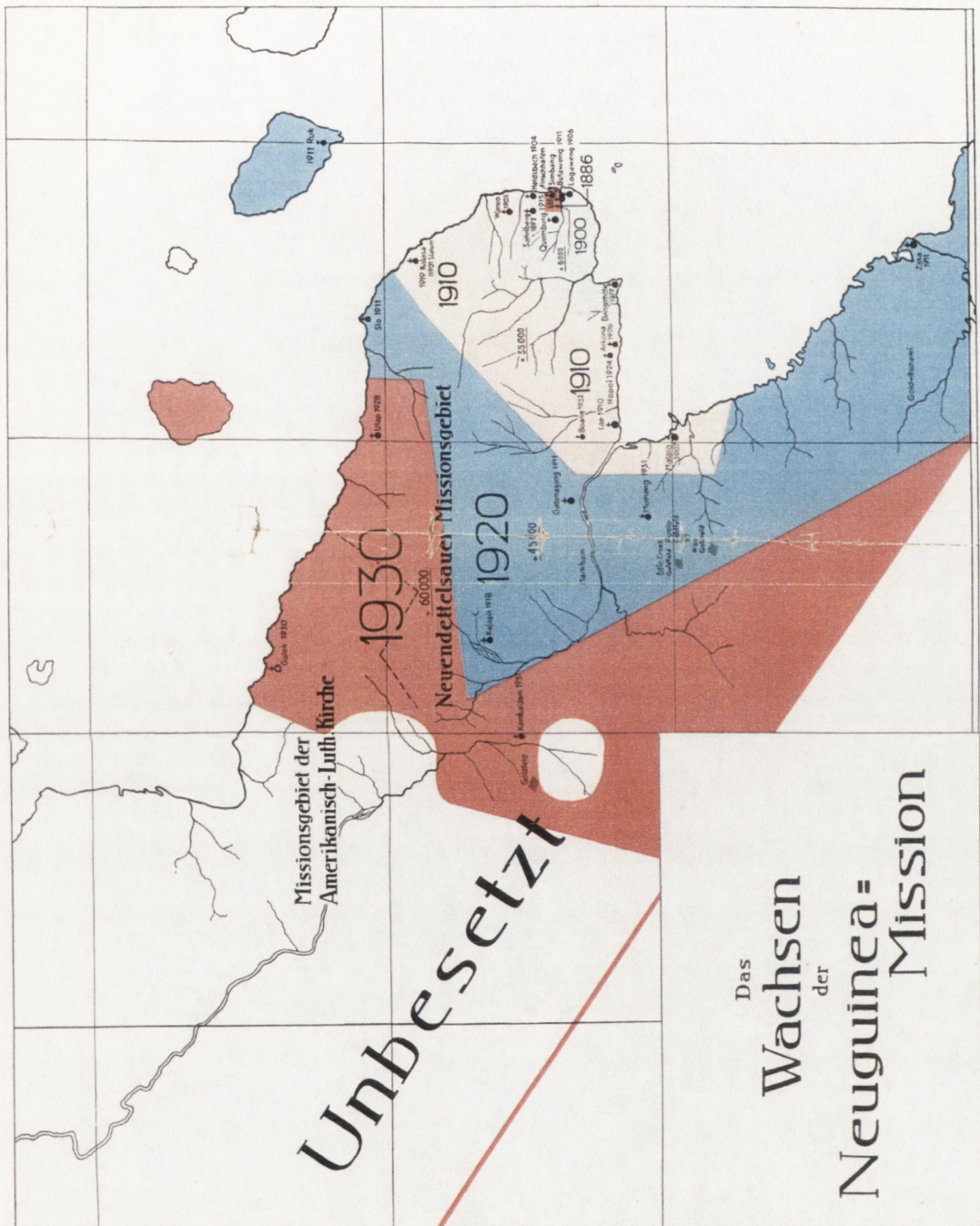
4.10. 1933 Eppelein to Schemm, ND 28/1-2.

<sup>154</sup> See for example Walter Freytag (ed.), *Die Deutsche Evangelische Heidenmission. Jahrbuch 1936 der vereinigten deutschen Missionskonferenzen*, Verlag der Deutschen Evangelischen Missionshilfe, Hamburg, fold out facing p. 80.

<sup>155</sup> Theile's file in Brisbane was destroyed, but selected excerpts were sent to Adelaide, the centre of surveillance of members of the UELCA. See NAA, D1915, SA20527 Thiele Frederick Otto.



**Map 3:**  
**Expansion of the Lutheran Mission in New Guinea (1886-1930).**



Source: Eppelein, Friedrich (ed.), *Das Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk und seine 4 Arbeitsgebiete*. Bericht 1933 der Gesellschaft für Innere und Äussere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche, Neuendettelsau August 1933.



**Table 3:**  
**Numbers of seminarians sent out by Neuendettelsau<sup>1</sup>**

Year	New Guinea	Brazil	Other	Total
1920-1929	13	16	1 (Australia) 6 (Europe) 2 (USA)	38
1930-1939	32	19	4 (Galicia) 2 (Palestine)	57

**Table 4:**  
**Field Personnel of the Lutheran Missions New Guinea in 1929**

Nationality	Men	Women	Total
German	36	29	65
American	10	11	21
British Subjects (Australian)	10	8	18

Organisation	Men	Women	Total
Neuendettelsau <sup>2</sup>	31	24	55
Rhenish Mission <sup>3</sup>	5	5	10
Iowa Synod	10	11	21
UELCA	10	8	18

**Table 5:**  
**German and Australian Staff of the LMF, December 1933<sup>4</sup>**

	Men	Women	Total
Ordained clergy	26		26
Lay workers	13	10	23
Wives		23	23
Total	39	33	72

Counted as personnel are employees and their adult dependants (wives). German staff in New Guinea includes all missionaries with German Nationality, irrespective of place of birth. Australian born women married to German men for example were legally no longer British subjects, but had become German. Whether a missionary was attached to Neuendettelsau, or one of the other societies or churches listed, follows mainly the name and organisational index of the volume *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea, the first Hundred Years*. In some cases, where a person is listed under more than one organisation, a decision was made placing this person under one organisation only, depending on the individual and historic circumstances. For example Johann Flierl is listed for the respective year as 'of the society in Neuendettelsau and the UELCA. Women whose nationality later changed due to marriage are listed under the nationality they held in 1929. Individuals are counted for 1929, even if they were only in New Guinea part of 1929 (either retiring and leaving NG the same year, or arriving in 1929).

<sup>1</sup> Figures taken from Eppelein, Lebenserinnerungen, Ms 1302/24i, p. 33.  
<sup>2</sup> Of the German staff attached to ND 15, or 25% had come to NG since 1928.  
<sup>3</sup> From 1929 to 1930 the Rheinische Mission doubled its staff from 10 to 20 members.  
<sup>4</sup> 15.1.1934 Theile, Bericht ueber meine 4. Reise nach Neu Guinea, Adelaide, UELCA - New Guinea Minutes and Reports.

## Conclusion

Back then I compared our situation to that of Ulysses, who had to steer between the maelstrom of Charybdis and the rock of Scylla.

*Ich habe damals unsere Lage verglichen mit der des Odysseus, der zwischen dem Strudel der Charybdis und dem Felsen der Skylla hindurchsteuern mußte.*

(Friedrich Eppelein 18.10.1945)<sup>1</sup>

During the late 1920s and early 1930s Neuendettelsau slowly but steadily re-positioned itself at home, and as a consequence also abroad. This it did deliberately and consciously. Its endorsement of the National Socialist regime in 1933 was neither a lapse caused by the great euphoria of the moment which temporarily threw the society off course, nor was it a response to a repressive and dictatorial regime which left Neuendettelsau no choice but to compromise to a certain degree. The society had its course set long before choices became restricted. It rejected the Weimar Republic out of fundamental objections, and as a response to the crisis of the late 1920s which generated political, economic and social turmoil. The vision leading men of the Neuendettelsauer society had was that of a united German nation, free both from the repercussions of the Treaty of Versailles, and divisive elements in its midst. The movements or groups Neuendettelsau wanted either limited in their influence or excluded from the nation were Bolshevism (including 'freethinkers' and atheists), Americanism (including democracy, capitalism and everything celebrating modernity in areas such as art and theatre), Catholicism, and Jews, the so called 'international Jewry'. Some of these groups were seen as intrinsically linked, such as Americanism, Capitalism and Jews, and Bolshevism and Jews - and all of them were described as 'international', and therefore against the interests of the nation and the German people.<sup>2</sup> Neuendettelsau's hope for unity at a time of apparent disunity was as much a desire for something, namely a homogenous, harmonious Christian people, as it was a call against something, namely against these un-German groups and movements, which it wanted excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

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<sup>1</sup> 18.10.1945 Friedrich Eppelein to Obmann Koch and all members of the board (resignation letter) ND 22/5.

<sup>2</sup> The flag of the Weimar republic was seen to represent these 'internationalist' groups in a symbolic way: Black (Catholics), red (Communists), and gold (Jews and Americanism).

Neuendettelsau embraced National Socialism slowly, and initially with great hesitation. In the spectrum of nationalistic movements and parties there were others that were closer to the society's vision, such as the party *Christlicher Volksdienst*. That Neuendettelsau set its hopes on the National Socialists was partly a pragmatic decision in the wake of the growing influence of the NSDAP during the early 1930s. Partly it was a response to a change of direction in regard to Christianity the NSDAP had deliberately undertaken. Eppelein and other leading men of the society, particularly Christian Keyßer, were throughout this time never completely at ease with the NSDAP's level of commitment to Christianity, but their judgment was that the potential benefits from rejuvenating and unifying the German people were a first step in the right direction.<sup>3</sup> Personal links and friendships helped to reassure Eppelein and others that there were enough influential people in the NSDAP who were sympathetic to Christianity in general and the society's aims in particular. Hans Schemm was one of the most prominent National Socialists the Neuendettelsauer society hoped to bring on side, and Eppelein had known him from teaching in Bayreuth for over a decade. The people Neuendettelsau thought were already on side, and willing to listen to, learn from, and support what Neuendettelsau had to offer were fellow Christian National Socialists, members of the movement *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) and its precursor groups. This movement not only gave a distinctly Lutheran Christian slant on the ideals of National Socialism, but also had an appreciation for the foreign mission enterprise. Be it by historic accident or the outcome of a development driven by the same inner logic as the Neuendettelsauer society itself, many early members of the German Christians in Bavaria, as well as in the rest of Germany, were active supporters of the foreign mission enterprise, some as lay people, some in the employ of mission societies. Closest to Neuendettelsau was Friedrich Klein, NSDAP member and pastor in the Franconian parish Grafengehaig. He became the intermediary between the society and the National Socialists, between director Eppelein and Schemm on numerous occasions beginning with the dismissal of Lossin. Klein's leadership of the Bavarian German Christians and the short-lived Bavarian NSEPB (National Socialist Protestant Pastors

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<sup>3</sup> See Holsten's analysis of the Keyßer method as a two step process. First the level of the Old Testament, during which the people to be missionised are told stories from the Old Testament, and gain new ethics and a new unity as a community, a *Volk*, after which the level of the New Testament, individual commitment to Jesus Christ and Christianity can grow and be fostered.

Federation)<sup>4</sup> gave Eppelein, Keyßer, and others the confidence to also join. The DC and the NSEPB were groups Neuendettelsau saw as the closest allies available to influence the NSDAP itself. These groups, close as they were to the society's visions and beliefs, nevertheless had to be further purged of heresies. The model Neuendettelsau operated with in the early stage of the National Socialist reign was that of changing and influencing the National Socialists from within, which was understood as part of *Volksmission*. From at least the mid-1930s on, if not already from 1934, Eppelein conceded that this mode of *Volksmission* via active participation in party organisations had failed. Christian Keyßer, however, seems to have stayed 'optimistic' against all odds throughout the Third Reich. In 1941 the German Protestant Mission Board, of which Keyßer was a member,<sup>5</sup> debated how to defend the institute for tropical medicine in Tübingen against a takeover by the National Socialists (*Gleichschaltung*), fearing that this unique training facility would not admit missionaries any more for courses. Keyßer suggested supporting the *Gleichschaltung*, as it would give missionaries the opportunity to mingle with National Socialists in Tübingen, and convert them.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of firmer hierarchies and a stricter structure of order and control paralleled the rise of National Socialism, and was a response, both embracing and defensive. The trend towards firmer models of control and power was, at least in Germany, part of the *Zeitgeist*. The late Weimar republic saw the militarisation of many facets of society. Youth groups, whether they were political, Christian or Zionist, marched in self-made uniforms, and the longing for strong leadership went beyond active supporters of National Socialism. Shortly after Hitler, the *Führer*, became chancellor of Germany, the Bavarian church urged its church president into retirement, as he was seen to be not quite up to the new times, and elected a new leader, Hans Meiser; the new title *Bischof* replaced the antiquated, anachronistic title, church president. *Fuehrerprinzip* and *Gleichschaltung* were appealing. Neuendettelsau partly admired the structures of National Socialism, and partly they needed them to fend off *Gleichschaltung* and Nazification. This process not only affected the field

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4 The NSEPB only existed for a short while, as soon the NSDAP decided against organisational entanglement with churches and clergy. See Scholder, pp. 244f;

5 Keyßer was member of the board (DEMR) of the federation of German Protestant missions (DEMT) not as the representative of the Neuendettelsauer Society, but as chairman of the Federation of German Protestant Missionaries.

6 See for example 11.8.1941 Keyßer to Schlunk, EMW 324.

in New Guinea, where the restructure of the mission included the development of firmer, stricter hierarchies, but also the many semi-attached groups at home, who met, knitted, collected, and supported the society. To comply with regulations, Neuendettelsau had to strip independence away from these groups, such as the *Kleinsammlung*, and make them firmly part of the society.<sup>7</sup>

During this time the rift between the home base and the field staff, which developed during the separation of the Madang and Finschhafen missions, widened. Many missionaries in New Guinea saw specific actions and inactions of the society at home as an expression of autocratic rule by the director, who refused to care about or listen to their concerns and needs. When the German vice-consul, Dr Walther Hellenthal, visited New Guinea in 1936, communications between Director Epplein and the field's leadership had broken down. Superintendent Wilhelm Flierl was on recreation leave in Germany, carrying with him the field's demand for the resignation of the director. For acting superintendent Pilhofer a personal dispute about the treatment of his son at the Neuendettelsauer children's home added to the tensions. Thus Hellenthal's encouragement to form a NSADP stronghold, mixed with threats that after a return of New Guinea to German rule only party members would be allowed to remain in the colony, was not discussed with Epplein, or anybody else in Neuendettelsau. Instead a separate NSDAP stronghold in Finschhafen, modelled on the SA group for seminarians in Neuendettelsau, was formed under the leadership of Hubert Stürtzenhofecker, and with the encouragement of Pilhofer, but without the knowledge or approval of the mother house.<sup>8</sup> The forming of the stronghold was a

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<sup>7</sup> This was done at times against the wishes of these groups. J. Stöbel, employed by Neuendettelsau as *Heimatmissionar*, for example, was also the chairman of an independent society, called *Neuendettelsauer Missionshilfe*, which collected donations for the Neuendettelsauer mission. He refused to hand over control of the *Missionshilfe*, and rejected demands for accountability of its bookkeeping. The Neuendettelsauer mission hired a lawyer and a private detective in Nuremberg. On 6.12.1939 a confidential report was delivered on Stöbel's private life, including allegations of gambling, sexual affairs and an illegitimate child. A few days later Stöbel signed a declaration the mission's chairman drew up, resigning from the *Missionshilfe* and nominating A. Schuster as his successor. In the process Stöbel accused Epplein of megalomania and backstabbing. Stöbel called him 'Heimtücker in Filzsocken', (literally man of cattiness in felt socks), which according to fellow pastors, Stöbel alleged, had been Epplein's nickname at school. 27.1.1939 Stöbel to Epplein, ND 52/21 Stöbel, J.

<sup>8</sup> Two other NSDAP strongholds were formed at the same time in Wau and Rabaul. The Finschhafen stronghold was exclusively for German missionaries of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen. The list of members Stürtzenhofecker sent to the leader of the NSDAP in Australia, Dr Becker, contained the names of 17 men and 18 women, all part of the mission. Most of those listed on the stronghold list had not been party members previously, but were then, in 1936, applying to become members. As the party in Germany at that

continuation of politics initiated by Neuendettelsau in 1933, but since then not pursued at home any longer. Again, as in 1933, the field and the community at home in Germany were at odds in their political outlook.<sup>9</sup>

Some months after the founding of the stronghold, Eppelein was informed about the actions of Stürzenhofecker and Pilhofer by Theile, who on return to Australia had found out about the stronghold through rumours circulating in the UELCA. Although opposed to the mission's party stronghold, Eppelein, fearing repercussions at home, felt unable to intervene, and convinced Theile likewise to do nothing. Torn between his care for Neuendettelsau, and the responsibility towards his government, to whom he had promised to remove all disloyal personnel, Theile decided to support director Eppelein's decision to wait. Theile's choice of primary loyalties followed on from the position he took in the early 1930s during the incorporation of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen. He tried to combine his duties towards the mission and his government, but when these duties collided, concerns for the mission came first. Theile's decision to do nothing in 1937 also had structural reasons. Theile was, despite being a member of the UELCA, in the employ of Neuendettelsau for his work for the Finschhafen Mission, and paid by the ALC for his work on behalf of the Lutheran Mission Madang. While the transnational Lutheran collaboration lasted, Theile was central to negotiations between the field, his church and the two controlling organisations overseas. With the separation of the fields and the restructure of control, Theile lost much of his authority and influence. The founding of the stronghold was, amongst other things, a revolt of the field against its home base. It also revealed, as a by-product, the Australian director Theile's lack of power and independence. The UELCA, too, was concerned about the formation of a party stronghold, but in turn did not understand the complicated structure Theile and Eppelein had put in place during the creation of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen. As far as the UELCA was concerned, the field was out of (their) control.

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time had just introduced a ban on memberships of ordained clergy, the majority of the men were never made party members. See 22.3.1938 John Walstab to the Administrator, Rabaul; NAA, A981, Nazism 1 Pt. 2., and the details given in the forms 'Meldeboegen' of the German consulate in 1938 (NAA, C443/2, Box 1).

<sup>9</sup> The missionaries in the field were also split in their political outlook. Some enthusiastically supported National Socialism, others joined the NSDAP stronghold for pragmatic reasons; of those who did not join the stronghold, some refused for political and/or religious reasons. For details see 'Meldeboegen' of the German consulate 1938 (NAA, C443/2, Box 1). While the society at home had, at least formally, joined the confessing church, a number of missionaries on the field continued to support the German Christians.

The separation of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen from its sister mission in Madang, and its restructuring as a German-controlled mission thus had many direct and indirect consequences within the network of Lutheran churches and mission bodies connected with the mission and the Neuendettelsauer society. The one relationship, however, everybody had been concerned about most seemed least affected by the changes. Contrary to the gloomy expectations voiced by Stefan Lehner and Wilhelm Flierl, the Australian Administration did not start exceptional actions against the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, nor its German superintendent.<sup>10</sup> The Administrator, W. R. McNicoll, had taken action before and during the formation of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, and had prevented the creation of a German controlled mission. The Lutheran Mission was incorporated according to the laws of New Guinea, and was controlled by a majority of Australian Lutherans. Satisfied with this arrangement, McNicoll's primary aims were to keep the Department of External Territories and the League of Nations from intruding into his affairs as Administrator. When in 1937 the newspaper *Smith's Weekly* published an article about Nazi propaganda being spread by German Lutheran missionaries, McNicoll assured the department that there was nothing happening to be concerned about. When at the end of 1938 the department again inquired whether national socialist propaganda was being spread amongst the natives—an issue raised by the newspaper *Labour Daily*—the unequivocal answer came back from Page, the government secretary in Rabaul:

No evidence here of any subversive acts by German nationals. ... No evidence nor knowledge of Nazi activities amongst natives.<sup>11</sup>

After looking into the matter more closely, McNicoll came to the same conclusion, but with a slightly changed emphasis. In May 1939 he sent to the department his summary statement, together with some attached reports:

Enquiry has not produced evidence of any *militant* Nazi activity in this Territory.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> In how far the closing of the highlands in the mid-1930s, which especially restricted the movements of 'helpers', indigenous evangelists from the coast, was motivated not only by security concerns, but also by a desire to hinder the expansion of the Finschhafen mission still needs a thorough investigation.

<sup>11</sup> 21.12.1938 Government Secretary Rabaul to Prime Minister's Department, Canberra. NAA, A981, Nazism 1 Pt. 2.

<sup>12</sup> 5.5.1938 W. Ramsay McNicoll to the Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, Canberra; AA :A981, Nazism 1 Pt. 2. [emphasis added by author]. District Officer E. Taylor observed: 'A number of the younger German missionaries are supporters of Hitler and Nazism, of which they make no secret, while the photographs of Hitler and Swastika emblems openly displayed in their houses bear this out. ... Efforts to trace photographs of Hitler in the huts of natives of the Markham Valley or elsewhere in the district were without

The change in wording reflected the information gathered. There was no denying that National Socialists were in New Guinea, and that they were visible and 'active'. As Australia had, from the occupation and the taking over of New Guinea under the Mandate system insisted not on mere neutrality of non-Australians in the Territory, but on loyalty to Australia, the Germans' display of National Socialist loyalties could be seen as bordering on the subversive—but at least they were not militant. The outbreak of war in 1939 changed the laws and guidelines McNicoll had so far been working under. The removal of potentially subversive enemy aliens became the most urgent task, overriding considerations about interference by the League and the department in Canberra. At the end of September 26 Germans<sup>13</sup> were detained and brought to Australia, amongst them 16 members of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen,<sup>14</sup> of whom all but four<sup>15</sup> had been named on Stürzenhofecker's NSDAP stronghold list the Administration had intercepted a few years earlier. Some of the non-stronghold members, however, were allowed to stay in New Guinea until the end of 1941, when the attack by Japanese troops brought the war and fighting to New Guinea.<sup>16</sup> The ongoing involvement of Australian Lutherans, and the incorporation of the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen under the laws of the Mandated Territory and with a majority of Australians in control—at least nominally—cushioned the impact war with Germany might have had, had the mission been openly under German control. As McNicoll assured the Department of Home and Territories, none of the

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results, and there was no evidence of Nazi propaganda amongst natives.' (E.Taylor to Government Secretary, Rabaul; NAA, A981, Nazism 1 Pt. 2.). John Walstab, chief of police in the Territory, contributed observations about the loyalty of 'mixed bloods', and attached a list of members of the National Socialist Party strongholds in Finschhafen, Rabaul and Wau. (22.3.1938 John Walstab to the Administrator, Rabaul; NAA, A981, Nazism 1 Pt. 2.).

13. Interned Germans who were not employed by the mission were: Carl August Docke, Heinrich Johann Franks, Helmut Fruechtenicht, Harry Glathe, Josef Wendelin Gruesser, Hans Richard Hirschfeld, Franz Melcher, Walter Ramcke, Karl Oskar Rundnagel, Peter Karl Gustav Uechtritz.

14. Wilhelm Bergmann, Kaspar Doebl, Wilhelm Fugmann, Leonhard Goetzelmann, Theodor Habenstein, Georg Hofmann, Karl Holzknicht, Hans Maurer, Adam Metzner, Konrad Munsel, Georg Pilhofer, Hermann Strauss, Hubert Stuerzenhofecker, Karl Wacke, Martin Winkler und Martin Zimmermann. Five of the male stronghold members were at that time not in New Guinea, but back in Germany: Jakob Herrlinger, Georg Stuerzenhofecker, Emil Daub, Georg Vicedom, and Carl Humbert. The female members of the Finschhafen stronghold were not interned.

15. Leonhard Goetzelmann, Adam Metzner, Hans Maurer und Theodor Habenstein.

16 Three missionaries, Adolf Wagner, Stefan Lehner, and Johan Decker, even managed to stay in New Guinea under Japanese occupation, the latter two with the knowledge and approval of Australian authorities.



belongings and property of the mission was enemy property.<sup>17</sup> The mission was not German.

Neuendettelsau's gradual push for more control during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the increasingly widening rift between the society and the ALC, made the UELCA, hard-pressed throughout the depression to finance some of its own work, such as the missions in Hermannsburg and Hope Vale, step away from firm commitments for New Guinea. Nevertheless, the Australian Lutherans kept supporting the Finschhafen mission financially and with lay personnel. This was to some extent due to close connections between the UELCA and the Neuendettelsauer society. Partly this was the outcome of Theile's mediation and unwavering support. In contrast to the amicable transformation of relations with Australian Lutherans, relations with the ALC ruptured. The consequences for the divided mission fields, the Lutheran Mission Madang and the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen, were ameliorated by the willingness of missionaries in the field to continue to work together across national divides.

The consequences, however, for the Neuendettelsauer society, which from January 1933 on had to rely solely on funding from Germany (with some help from Australia) were far-reaching. The success of Neuendettelsau's daring repositioning depended on ongoing support at home, support from local Lutherans, the Bavarian church, and government agencies. Embracing and supporting the National Socialist government and party would, it was anticipated, lead to an embrace of Neuendettelsau, its training facilities, expertise and advice. Schemm, however, on whom Neuendettelsau had set great hopes, made no use of the society and its facilities<sup>18</sup>, and Adolf Hitler, with whom Eppelein tried to get in contact, refused to give Eppelein an audience. Instead the government and the relevant departments slowly but steadily restricted essential areas of the Neuendettelsauer society's operations. Like a net getting tighter and tighter, until there was less and less room to move, laws and regulations restricted progressively the content of publications, the collecting of donations, and the amount of foreign exchange.<sup>19</sup>

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17 11.12.1939 McNicoll to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, NAA, A518, A846/6/242/Pt. 1.

18 Schemm died in a car accident in March 1935.

19 For a detailed account, including Eppelein's expulsion from the NSDAP, see Eppelein, *Lebenserinnerungen*, especially volume 24i.

Neuendettelsau's defense of the society, its foreign mission and fundamental beliefs followed the pattern developed earlier: it continued to offer itself to the National Socialist government, and argued for the usefulness of the society—and Protestant foreign mission in general—for the nation and its influence abroad. In 1934 Eppelein compiled a collection of essays and figures devoted to the impact foreign missions had on Germany's reputation abroad, and on their success in preserving German culture and German influence in the absence of a German colonial empire.<sup>20</sup> Eppelein contacted all major German Protestant mission societies, fellow members of the German Protestant Mission board (*Deutscher Evangelischer Missionsrat*, DEMR)<sup>21</sup>, many of whom were only too happy to assist Eppelein's undertaking.<sup>22</sup>

To disentangle pragmatic, strategic decisions from deeply held beliefs is more often than not impossible. Defence against and reactions to National Socialist actions and attacks also did not necessarily lead to alternative positions and political opposition. The same year Eppelein compiled his above mentioned-collection, Christian Keyßer published a defense of the Old Testament, which was under attack for being Jewish. Radical German Christians argued that the Old and parts of the New Testament should be expurgated from the biblical canon. Kantzenbach tactfully remarked on the intertwining of arguments in favour of the Old Testament with Anti-Semitism and the denigration of Jews and Jewishness past and present, that 'one cannot quite feel joy about Keyßer's defense of the Old Testament'.<sup>23</sup>

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20 Eppelein, Friedrich, *Die Mission außenpolitisch*, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verl., 1934.

21 In response to National Socialist Gleichschaltung the Organisation of Protestant German foreign mission societies was restructured in 1933, and named *Deutscher Evangelischer Missionstag (DEMT)*; its board had the name *Deutscher Evangelischer Missionsrat (DEMR)*.

22 Many German mission societies Eppelein approached sent information, including the Leipzig Mission, Gossner Mission, Herrenhut, the Rheinische Mission, Basle and Breklum. See ND 26/21 Correspondence with Mission Societies. In the early 1940s, when it was anticipated that Germany would regain colonies, at least in Africa, the German Protestant Missions tried to negotiate their involvement in this future colonial empire. They were then willing to obey and work under National Socialist rule and regulations abroad. Asked by the Foreign Office to resolve differences with the Catholic foreign missions, they held negotiations in Würzburg, and partitioned areas within the future National Socialist German empire between them. Neuendettelsau at that stage was disappointed that the negotiations dealt only with Africa, and not with the Pacific. Keyßer wrote to Schlunk, that it was 'a pity that New Guinea is not in Africa, and that I am so old!'. 23.6.1941 Keyßer to Schlunk, EMW 324. See also for example 31.7.1940 and 28.7.1941 Circulars by S. Knak, EMW 320, and Bundesarchiv Potsdam, Dienststelle Rosenberg 62 Di 1, 142.

23 'Der Verteidigung des Alten Testaments durch Keyßer wird man freilich nicht ganz froh.' Kantzenbach, p. 235; see Keyßer, Christian, *Altes Testament und heutige Zeit*, Neuendettelsau : Freimund-Verl., 1934. The booklet was one of only six publications by the Freimund Verlag banned in Eastern Germany between 1946 and 1953. For the lists of banned literature see <http://www.polunbi.de/bibliothek/>.

Having severed its transnational Lutheran collaboration, Neuendettelsau was unable to buffer the impact the National Socialist reign had on its operation and finances through foreign aid. Instead the society became more and more dependent on the support of the Bavarian church and the German Protestant Mission Board. As a consequence of National Socialist regulation, such as those restricting door-to-door collecting, Neuendettelsau's donations came increasingly indirectly through congregations of the Bavarian church. In the process of having to rely on the support of the Bavarian church, Neuendettelsau also had to support the policies and direction of the Bavarian church. At the national level the DEMR centralised dealings with government departments, and undertook negotiations for foreign exchange, visas and other matters on behalf of all individual societies. Occasional attempts by Neuendettelsau to bypass the DEMR led to stern reprimands from the board. Neuendettelsau had no choice but to support the DEMR, or face national isolation.

In 1934 a smoldering conflict within the Protestant German churches erupted, and led to a split between German Christians and a new movement, which called itself Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*). The history of the ensuing struggle of the churches (*Kirchenkampf*) is complicated, and this conclusion cannot trace its complexities, but only make a few generalising remarks on the Neuendettelsauer society. Eppelein and Keyßer, who had earlier proclaimed their membership and support for the Bavarian German Christians in the *Freimund*, distrusted the growing radicalism of the National German Christians, and government intrusions into church matters. At the same time they were not unwilling to continue their support of the more moderate Bavarian movement. The decision of the DEMR to place itself as a group on the side of the Confessing church, and the decision of the Bavarian church to do likewise, and force the Bavarian German Christians to dissolve their organisation left Neuendettelsau no choice. The Neuendettelsauer society became part of the confessing church.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s Neuendettelsau remained nominally an independent society, but its capacity for independent decisions progressively shrank.

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<sup>24</sup> Part of these complex developments was an attempt by the German Protestant Church, whose formation was in itself a complicated part of the story of the struggle of the churches, to depose the Bavarian Bishop Hans Meiser in favour of a German Christian. This attempt was supported by National Socialist government agencies. Neuendettelsau opposed this coup on emotional and theological grounds.

The situation the Neuendettelsauer mission faced after WWI was unique—the League of Nations and the Mandate system had no precedents. Yet the Mandate's legitimacy and purpose were contested. Some saw the Mandate system as a chance to bring a new morality to empires; Pilhofer especially understood it as a means to constrain action and inaction by the Australian administration. Others, especially Theile, were reluctant to bring any complaints to the League, as the power it had to call Australia to account heightened Australian demands for sovereignty over New Guinea. From a German point of view, and this was the position Eppelein took, the Mandate system was little more than a conspiracy by the winners of the war to steal German colonies. His journey to Australia and New Guinea at the beginning of his directorship served to reinforce a German-centred point of view. Making the need to solve problems in Germany the priority, however was for Eppelein not an act of abandoning New Guinea and the Finschhafen mission, but an attempt to bring the Neuendettelsauer society into a position to provide better support in the field, especially spiritually and religiously. In Eppelein's opinion German Lutheran mission principles and practice were superior to those of other nations, doctrinally purer and better able to create and foster Christian communities in New Guinea. The society in Neuendettelsau therefore was the centre, and the mission field the periphery.

By 1931 the National Socialists were seen by Neuendettelsau as the only hope to bring Germany out of its crisis and back to honour and unity. Gradually most reservations were put aside in favour of trusting the National Socialists, and hoping that they would be willing to seek Neuendettelsau's advice. By 1933 the society was willing to support the new regime as advisor, mentor and active participant. To make itself more acceptable to the nationalistic movements, particularly the National Socialists, which would, so it was hoped, rejuvenate and reform the nation, the Neuendettelsauer Society severed its transnational Lutheran co-operation abroad. The society's demand for sole control over a mission field in New Guinea pandered to rising nationalism amongst Neuendettelsau's supporters and in Germany at large. It was an attempt to gain an increase in donations and reputation for the society and its work. It was also an expression of patriotic, nationalistic, anti-American sentiments that swept through the leading men of the society. Parallel to Neuendettelsau's repositioning at home went a reshaping and restructuring of its relationships abroad, and this led to ruptures and separations. Paradoxically, while unity was Neuendettelsau's proclaimed aim, unity of congregations, people and the nation, both in Germany and in

New Guinea, its actions created and led to division and disunity. Or perhaps this is not paradoxical at all. Can a concept of unity, which is based on homogeneity, and has no ideological resources to deal with dissent and difference, ever lead to anything but to ruptures of unity and disintegration?

The double structure created by Eppelein and Theile—incorporation of the mission under the rules of the Territory of New Guinea *and* direct control by the Neuendettelsau motherhouse in Germany—was a pragmatic solution. It allowed the mission to operate across national borders at a time when the rise of nationalism in both countries, Germany and Australia, made such transnational undertakings difficult. Within the escalating political situation of the mid- and late 1930s, however, the conflicting demands placed on everybody connected with the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen made it impossible to keep both systems working parallel to each other. Increasingly both Eppelein and Theile were restricted in their ability to act. Theile could not be laid off in order to save money, as the field personnel demanded in the mid-1930s, nor could Eppelein fully explain to his staff in New Guinea the society's decision to keep Theile, without undermining his own authority. The Australian government saw Theile as the mission's director, while the field understood Eppelein to be in charge. The NSDAP stronghold in Finschhafen could not be dissolved without alienating the party and government in Germany, and at the same time could not be tolerated without alienating the Australian Administration. Paralysed, Eppelein and Theile delayed action.

In the end war indiscriminately subsumed the structures created, and those who had created them, as well as those who had opposed them. Theile was interned in Australia for his connections with Germany and his inaction about the Finschhafen stronghold. A diabetic, he died on 17 August 1945, 'two days after the war in the Pacific ended'.<sup>25</sup> Stefan Lehner, who had remained in New Guinea under Japanese control was brought to Australia after

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<sup>25</sup> See Gerhardy, Gordon, 'Some specific observations on Partnership involving the Australian Church', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 89. See for example 10.10.1939 (39/2151) Theile to McNicoll (UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Corr. Theile with Administration), 11.10.1939 Theile to Needham; 12.10.1939 Needham to Theile (UELCA-NG: LMF 54 Corr. Theile & ecumenical groups). These letters, especially in combination with letters Theile wrote to Stolz, which were confiscated by the Security Service during a raid of Stolz's house at the beginning of 1941 were to become the main body of evidence against Theile, which justified his internment. See NAA, D1915, SA 20502.

Allied troops had regained control of the Huon peninsula. Letters in his possession addressed to his wife Sophie, full of patriotic pro-German statements and bitter comments about attacks on villages by American and Australian fighter planes, were seized by the Australian security services. Petitions to government by friends and colleagues to allow him to return to New Guinea were in vain. Stefan Lehner died in Brisbane on 25 May 1947.<sup>26</sup> Friedrich Eppelein and Christian Keyßer both lost their positions in Neuendettelsau during the denazification of the society in 1945. Keyßer was rehabilitated in a second trial in 1947, and although retired continued to give talks to and teach seminarians in Neuendettelsau. Eppelein was relegated to Parish duties, and despite having been director of the mission society for 17 years, has become a marginal figure in mission histories.<sup>27</sup> In late 1945 the Lutheran Mission Finschhafen was merged with the Lutheran Mission Madang once again, and placed under the control of the ALC. The reunited mission's headquarters were shifted to Lae and the American Lutheran missionary Dr John Kuder became superintendent, and in 1956 first Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea.<sup>28</sup>

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26 See Nelson, 'Loyalties at Sword Point'; NAA, A367, C68765 LEHNER, Reverend Stephen; NAA BP242/1, Q24767 Lehner, Stephen - Queensland investigation case file. Sophie Lehner had been evacuated to mainland Australia in December 1941.

27 The index of Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, for example gives 9 references for Eppelein, 24 for Theile, and 38 for Keyßer.

28 See John F. Kuder, 'Reconstruction and Consolidation: LMNG after World War II', Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, pp. 223-251.



### Plate 3:

### Individual Missionaries of the Neuendettelsauer Mission



1) S. Lehner

G. Pilhofer

W. Flierl



2) F. Örtel



3) C. Keyßer



4) F. O. Theile



5) R. Taeuber

J. Flierl

F. Eppelein

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- 3) Christian Keyßer (1921), Herwig Wagner and Hermann Reiner (eds.), *The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The first hundred years: 1886-1986*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 1986, p. 330.
- 4) Friedrich Otto Theile (no date), Obituary, *The Queensland Lutheran* Vol. III, No. 9, 5.9.1945.
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